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GLEANINGS
FROM THE
NATURAL HISTORY OF THE
ANCIENTS.





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GLEANINGS

FROM THE

NATURAL HISTORY OF THE ANCIENTS.

BY

REV. M. G. WATKINS, M.A.

Ἄλλ' οὐ μέντοι σοι, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, Ἀλκίνοῦ γε ἀπόλογον ἔρῳ.

Platonis Respublica, x. 614.



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INTRODUCTION.



THESE chapters, on a few of the curiosities connected with the natural history of the ancients, are in some respects a faithful reflection of that knowledge. They are fragmentary, and greatly indebted to the labours of previous workers. But they have not been put together without much trouble and not a little honest, diligent research; my object being to collect some of the more interesting facts bearing upon ten or a dozen different subjects, rather than to write a complete natural history of the ancients. I have generally traced these curious beliefs through their mediæval modifications; partly that the reader might be led to contrast them with the exacter knowledge of the present day, partly in order to shew their growth from, in some cases, pre-historic and geological times.

No one is more aware of the incompleteness of these Essays, yet I venture to hope that some may

find in reading them a little of the same pleasure which I have experienced while searching for the facts they contain among the less frequently explored by-paths of classical literature. They are, at all events, a contribution to a fascinating study—speculations rendered venerable by their antiquity, rather than by the credit due to the writers who are here laid under contribution. I would fain shelter, therefore, under Lord Bacon's mantle: "Summæ pusillanimitatis est auctoribus infinita tribuere, auctori autem auctorum, atque adeo omnis auctoritatis, temporis, jus suum denegare. Recte enim veritas temporis filia dicitur non auctoritatis."¹

He who has been accustomed to test modern biological problems by means of the inductive philosophy, is struck with amazement when he first turns to the natural history of the ancients. There are many regular writers of it; many scattered allusions to and accounts of animal life in the poets. But all the natural history of the ancients labours under the same faults, faults inseparable, however, from the infancy of the race—an inability to discriminate with any accuracy, great ignorance of anatomy and physiology, and a habit of accepting statements on insufficient evidence. The writers of ancient natural history were, to use a modern phrase of pregnant meaning, wholly uncritical. Poetry and folk-lore were confused with exact science. Like children, they were quick to grasp at marvels, to embrace a

¹ "Nov. Organum," i. 84.

narrative eagerly the more marvellous that it was. Anything in the nature of a traveller's story they welcomed as readily as we should distrust it. "Thus the crocodile from an egg growing up to an exceeding magnitude, common conceit and divers writers deliver, it hath no period of encrease, but groweth as long as it liveth. And thus, in brief, in most apprehensions the conceits of men extend the considerations of things, and dilate their notions beyond the propriety of their natures."—(Sir T. Browne, "Vulgar Errors," vii. 15.)

It has often been questioned whether Herodotus was really imposed upon by the Egyptian priests or not. In either case the result, so far as he is concerned, is the same. Many of the marvels in the "Odyssey" are exaggerations and distortions of merchants' and sailors' narratives. While they accepted all that was told them without much questioning or hesitation, the ancient writers of natural history never dreamt of testing any conclusion by observation, much more by experiment. Pliny relates a thousand marvels which he might have omitted or modified had he taken the trouble to consult nature. But a naturalist, in his acceptance of the term, meant little more than a compiler and transcriber. From this mistaken view, natural historians among the ancients were quick to follow previous writers, and it is not surprising to find blunders and misconceptions thus repeated over and over again. No museums or collections enabled them to correct wrong im-

pressions. Later historians were willing to believe the marvels set forth by their predecessors, and, so long as they did not deem it a part of their duty to make original inquiries, it was inevitable that hippogryphs, harpies, chimæras, and many more fabulous monsters were handed on from generation to generation as creatures which possessed a real existence. Readers, for their part, were glad to believe all that was striking and awe-inspiring. They, no more than authors, dreamt of weighing authorities.

Turning to Greek writers or retailers of natural history, Homer and Hesiod alluded to many fables, and mentioned many plants and animals in words which succeeding Greek writers seized upon and amplified. Hippocrates, B.C. 460, may be termed the first regular writer of natural history, although much has been attributed to him which belongs to writers of the same name. Aristotle, B.C. 356, is superior to all other Greek writers in copiousness and method. Several of his treatises on natural history have been lost, but what remains gives a high idea of his sagacity. His royal pupil Alexander is said to have sent him specimens from the East. Theophrastus, B.C. 322, has left behind valuable writings on botany. Strabo, B.C. 30, is useful for geography. Ctesias, who was a contemporary of Herodotus, wrote on the products of Persia and India. Xenophon's work on the chase was supplemented by Arrian's book at the beginning of the second century after Christ. *Materia medica* was handled about the same time

by Dioscorides. Pausanias, A.D. 160, touches on much that is of physical and economical interest in his "Itinerary of Greece." The "Onomasticon" of Pollux, a Greek sophist and grammarian, A.D. 183, treats in ten books of the meals, hunting, animals, etc., of the ancients. Oppian and Ælian, in the beginning of the third Christian century, are of considerable interest to the student of natural history. The former is the author of a long poem on "Fish and Fishing," and another on "Hunting and Dogs," both of which display the characteristic want of accuracy of the ancient zoological writers. Among other works, Ælian wrote seventeen books "De Animalium Natura." These have come down to us. They are seemingly thrown together without any definite arrangement, and abound in hearsay and marvellous anecdotes. Of Stobæus, beyond the fact that he was born at Stobi, in Macedonia, little is known. Even the time at which he lived is uncertain. He and Photius, however, have rescued for us numerous interesting details of Greek life and many extracts from earlier writers. Among these authors, then, the student of Greek natural history has to quarry.

In the century before our Lord, Cæsar and Varro among Latin authors claim attention. The former contains much that is valuable, especially in relation to Gaul and Britain; the latter, of large and varied erudition, wrote no fewer than 490 books. His three books "De Re Rustica" are the most important treatises extant upon ancient agriculture. Book I. treats of farms and

lands ; Book II. of the management of cattle ; Book III. of the smaller animals of a farm—hares, dormice, etc. The poem (ascribed to Ovid) on fishing (“Halieuticon”), is merely a fragment, yet contains many spirited lines, and the wiles of the *lupus* to escape from the hook as there described are the same which have frequently been experienced by the modern salmon and trout fisher, when the fish—

“in auras
Emicat, atque dolos saltu deludit inultus.”

The vast compilations of Pliny, A.D. 79, avowedly intended for a book of reference, have proved a mine of wealth to all succeeding writers on natural history. They are very uncritical ; Pliny’s chief anxiety apparently having been that no moment should be wasted, and that everything which he heard should at once be reduced to writing. Nemesianus wrote on hunting, fishing, and navigation. Some three hundred lines only of his poem on the first of these subjects have been preserved. Much that is interesting may be found in Martial’s “Epigrams.” Mr. Simcox speaks of the “careless descriptions” of Apuleius, A.D. 163 ; a few pearls may be collected from the depths of his rhetorical sea. Juvenal here and there, in his gloomy pictures of Roman society, throws in a brighter tint which he has selected from what may be called the natural history of his day. All scholarly fishermen know that charming idyll of Ausonius on the Moselle. He was evidently an angler, to judge from the spirited and life-like descriptions of fish and fishing which he introduces.

Besides these authors, the ordinary poets have been freely laid under contribution in the following pages. They form a sample of the wealth of material which yet remains for zoologists in the writers of Greece and Rome.

For much of this brief account of Latin authors I am indebted to Mr. Simcox's "History of Latin Literature" (Longmans).

M. G. W.





GLEANINGS FROM THE NATURAL HISTORY OF THE ANCIENTS.

CHAPTER I.

A HOMERIC BESTIARY.

IN spite of the attention which has of late years been devoted to Homer, very little care has been expended on the plants and creatures which he introduces in his two immortal poems, and yet the subject is replete with interest. From the manner in which he notices the most striking features of the flora of Greece, or the remarks which he makes on animated nature, something of the man's personality and tastes might, it is only reasonable to suppose, be inferred. The attempt to recover special traits of the poet by this method, however, fails, and we are reduced, did we only judge by this line of argument, to fall back upon the view of those critics who hold that the "Iliad" and "Odyssey" were simply a floating collection of

ballads put together by Peisistratus, while no actual Homer ever existed; or, at all events, that he never wrote the fragmentary verses which were thus pieced together. Interesting questions also arise respecting the conformity of the Homeric fauna and flora with the present state of Greece; what animals or birds have become extinct or diminished in numbers; whether any remains of the prehistoric condition of the country are apparent in the poems and the like. Unluckily the evidence for these facts within the Homeric poems is very fragmentary, and there is an utter want of authorities with which to compare their statements until the time of Herodotus is reached. A splendid procession indeed of animals set in a beautiful landscape is presented to our eyes in Homer, much as the visitor to an Egyptian temple gazes at the painted birds, beasts, and trees on its walls. But the mind must for the most part deal with these representations as if isolated from all further knowledge of them. In too many cases, too, Homer only introduces his birds and animals by way of simile. They are not described as a natural historian would depict them; they are hinted at and alluded to. So that the student of Homer's natural history finds himself baffled on every side.

Yet a few curious facts emerge on careful investigation. The predominance of the lion with Homer in similes serves to show that this animal was familiarly known in Europe in his time. For many centuries there have been no lions in this continent. The three chief varieties of the animal

at present are the Barbary, Senegal, and Persian lion. The disappearance of the lion before civilized life and agriculture is only second to that of the elephant. Lions have died out in Egypt, Syria, and Palestine as well as in our continent, and are being driven farther and farther into the trackless wilds of South Africa as population spreads up the river valleys, and grassy slopes are enclosed for farms. Herodotus tells us that lions abounded on the rocky portions of Macedonia and Thessaly. They attacked the baggage animals of Xerxes on his march through these districts into Greece, and fell specially upon the camels. The historian naïvely wonders at them for abandoning their ordinary habits of preying on horses, oxen, and men to attack camels, a creature which they could never before have seen. He gives a most valuable notice, too, of the region haunted by these lions, which, it seems, was from the river Achelous (the present Aspro Potamo) in the west to the Nestus or Mesto in the east, the boundary between Thrace and Macedonia.¹ As showing the tendency of the ancient natural historians to copy one another, it is worth remarking that Aristotle and Pliny, when treating of lions, give the same limits for them. Cybele's chariot was represented as drawn by lions; another testimony that the early Greeks knew the character of the localities frequented by these animals. Of Aristotle's two kind of lions, the thicker and more hairy variety seems to refer to the ordinary

¹ Bk. vii. 125, 126.

African lion with fine flowing mane; the other, which he describes as longer in shape and more straight-haired, might mean what is now known as the maneless lion of Gujerat.¹ An amusing chapter of Aulus Gellius² arraigns Herodotus, "the most noble of historians," for stating that the lioness only brings forth once during her life, and then only one cub, giving the marvellous reason which may be found in the third Book of Herodotus, the laceration of the mother's internal membranes by the sharp claws of the cub. Against this testimony he quotes passages of Homer, "the most illustrious of poets," to show that lions defended their cubs, not their cub; and continues by quoting Aristotle on the point, who calls it "an old woman's fable." But we incidentally learn that lions had become scarcer in Aristotle's time, a hundred years after Herodotus, as the former says, "The story hath been put together from the fact of lions being scarce, and the inventor of the myth not knowing how to account otherwise for this fact." Another instance of credulity immediately succeeds this discriminating remark, which also shows the utterly uncritical state of mind of the ancients, even of so distinguished a philosopher as Aristotle, when the weighing of evidence and collection of facts, which is so rigorously exacted by the modern inductive philosophy, is concerned. "The Syrian lions," he says, "bear at first five cubs, next year four, and so on down to one, after which they never again generate."

¹ Ar.; "De Anim. Hist.," ix., 31. ² *Ibid.*, xiii. 7.

Agamemnon wears a lion's skin as a mantle; but the animal generally appears in fables. Penelope ponders on her bed before sleeping, as a lion when surrounded by a ring of hunters takes counsel with himself. We see the lion in such passages exulting at finding prey, whether stag or wild goat, killing a hind's fawns, putting to flight and seizing oxen, terrifying bleating goats by his presence, driven ravening by men and boys from the fold, slaying a bull, fighting with a wild boar for water with its cubs, or tracking out a man who has stolen them, being attacked and killed by angry villagers, or itself attacking the folds. Each of these pictures is beautiful in itself, and the whole give an excellent history of the habits of the European lion. Odysseus, after the slaughter of the suitors, glares round him like a lion. Lions were engraved on the belt of Hercules, and surrounded the forceress Circe's abode; cats even at this early period being favourite animals of witchcraft. Proteus again changes himself into a lion, so that this animal must have been sufficiently familiar to Greeks. When the savagery of Cyclops devouring the two hapless comrades of Odysseus has to be painted, Homer makes him "eat like a lion from the mountains," tearing them limb from limb and not even leaving their bones. Jackals are only introduced at any length in one passage, but that an eminently characteristic one. The Trojans follow Odysseus "like dappled jackals from the mountains standing round a wounded, branchy stag, whom a hunter has smitten with an

arrow. It escapes by speed of foot while its blood is warm and its knees are firm, but when the bitter shaft subdues it, then ravening jackals tear it to pieces in a shady grove among the hills; but the deity brings there a mighty lion, when they shrink aside while he devours."¹ The panther only of the *felidæ* is mentioned besides the lion. Paris and others wear its skin. Its fierceness is prominent in a simile when it is represented as issuing from thick covert to charge the hunter, in no way dismayed at his presence or at the baying of the dogs, and attempting to strike him down. Even when pierced by his spear it ceases not its rage until overwhelmed by darts or done to death. The less warlike tone of the "Odyssey" is indicated by the fact that there are only four similes in it taken from the lion, whereas there are eleven in the "Iliad." The vulture only appears once, war never, and storm never.²

On the mighty belt of Hercules, in Hades, were wrought bears, the only evidence that Homer knew that animal. This is the *ursus Arctos*, once an inhabitant of our own islands, and still to be found in certain mountainous districts of Europe. The wild boar is much more familiar to Homer; it was sacrificed to Zeus and the Sungod, and also appears in the belt of Hercules. Proteus transforms himself into it. The Calydonian wild boar roots up trees in a mythical fashion, suggestive of some dim remembrance of the mammoth.³ The

¹ "Iliad," xi. 474.

² Gladstone; "Juv. Mundi," p. 514.

³ "Iliad," ix. 535.

dogskin helmet of Odysseus is adorned with teeth of a wild boar. Two warriors fall upon the foe like two wild boars stoutly charging the hounds. The following pictures are so lifelike that it is hard to conceive that Homer had not witnessed them. "As when a boar upon the mountains, trusting in his strength, abides the mighty on-coming rush of men in a lonely place, and the bristles rise erect upon his back while his eyes shine with flame; but he gnashes his teeth, eagerly desirous to avenge himself on dogs and men, so did Idomeneus," etc. And again: "They rushed forwards like hounds which spring upon a boar, after he has been wounded, in front of youthful hunters."¹ Another vivid picture represents a lion and a boar fighting for a rill of water on the mountain-tops, and the lion subduing the panting boar.

The word "elephant" is only used by Homer for a distinctively eastern product, ivory. Bulls were found in a wild state on the Greek mountains, as until recent centuries in our own land. Their hides were used for sleeping on. An allusion occurs to an active hunter cutting down a wild bull by a stroke behind the head with a sharp axe. Scamander is said to roar like a bull. When Penelope unlocks the doors of her treasury, as they roll back they roar like a bull feeding in a meadow. Oxen were, of course, domesticated from very early days. Laomedon caused Apollo to feed "his heavy-footed, crumpled-horned oxen in the lawns of many-valled wooded Ida."² Oxen

¹ "Iliad," xiii. 471 ; xvii. 725.

² *Ibid.*, xxi. 448.

were eaten at a funeral feast, and sacrificed, especially black ones, to Poseidon. The misguided followers of Odysseus perished through their folly in eating the oxen of the Sun-god, in the Isle of Thrinacia, when the Sun-god amusingly threatens Zeus that if the sacrilege be not avenged, he will go down to Hades and shine among the dead.¹

Wild goats seem to have been found on lonely mountains. In the isle off the land of the Cyclopes were herds of them. They were eaten at feasts. We find them shrinking with fear from a lion. Argus had been used to hunt them. The horns of one are mentioned as being sixteen palms in length, which were made into a bow and tipped with gold. Two species of wild goat yet inhabit Europe, the *Capra ibex* of the Alps, whose horns will measure two feet eight inches in length; and the *C. Pyrenaica*, of which the horns are only two inches less. The goat was sacrificed to Apollo in the Homeric poems. A simile in the "Iliad" represents two lions as snatching away a goat from sharp-toothed dogs; they bear it off in their jaws, raising it on high from the earth among the thickets.

The Homeric dogs much resemble modern dogs in their habits. They tear corpses (like the dogs of Eastern cities and countries) in conjunction with the fowls of the air; and guard sheep and swine. Eumæus, the swine-herd, thus employs four. They hunt lions, boars, stags, roe-deer and hares. A characteristic passage describes their behaviour

¹ "Odyssey," xii.

with lions. It forms a compartment in the shield which Hephæstus forged for Achilles. "On it he fashioned a herd of straight-horned kine; the cows were made of gold and tin, and with lowing they ran forth from the stall to their pasture by a rushing river edged with rattling reeds. Four shepherds of gold marched along with the kine, and nine swift-footed dogs followed them. But two monstrous lions among the leading kine seized the loud-roaring bull, and he, mightily bellowing, was dragged along, while the dogs and youths followed them up. They, however, having torn off the hide of the great bull, proceeded to lap up its bowels and black blood; but the shepherds fruitlessly pressed upon them, urging on the swift dogs. They, indeed, kept on springing back in dismay from an attempt to bite the lions, but standing very near continued howling and avoiding them."¹ No greater reproach can be addressed to a warrior than to stigmatize him as possessing "a dog's eye and a stag's heart." Dogs bay round a palace in Ithaca and tear intruders, just as the Molossian dogs of old and present days resent the approach of strangers. Telemachus stalks about his island home like a modern country gentleman, with his dogs following him. The episode of Argus, the faithful dog of Odysseus, is too well known to need more allusion to it.² In the palace of Alcinous were hounds of gold and silver, the work of Hephæstus; to heighten their marvel the poet, as often in the shield of Achilles and elsewhere,

¹ "Iliad," xviii. 581.

² "Odyssey," xvii.

represents them as being animated. Here they are "immortal and free from old age for aye."¹ Another celebrated dog of myth was the dog of Hades, afterwards known as Cerberus. When Odysseus meets the shade of Heracles in the lower world, the latter tells him that he had been compelled to enter Hades while he was yet alive, and drag this dog to the upper air, "for no greater task could be devised;" but Hermes and blue-eyed Athene helped him to perform it.² Orion's dog was a well-known star. In all these cases the dog is even in Homer's time a familiar domestic creature. Lap-dogs too are named. Perhaps a faint reflection of the wonder which the taming of the creature first caused among men yet glimmers on the mythical stories just related.

Stags and fawns are frequently mentioned in the Homeric poems; this is only natural, considering the numbers which in the early days of Greece must have been found on her mountains or feeding in the fair glens beside them. Sheep appear among domesticated animals bleating as they wait to be milked. The riotous wooers of Penelope eat sheep, kine, and goats. There is yet a wild sheep in Sardinia, known as *ovis musmon*, with horns one foot eleven inches long. Lambs are born with horns, says Homer, in Libya, and the sheep there bring forth thrice in a year.³ Can this story of the horned lambs be a reflection of the true history of the wild sheep of Europe? White

¹ "Odyssey," vii. 94.

² *Ibid.*, xi. 263.

³ *Ibid.*, iv. 85, 86.

and black lambs were sacrificed to Earth, Apollo, Helios, and Zeus. As for swine, the herds kept by Eumæus, their huge pigsties, their grunting, and the manner in which one is butchered by Odysseus, are amusingly related in the fourteenth Book of the "Odyssey." They are called "delicately fed," and they were singled when killed for a feast.

The wolf was well known to the early Greeks. We find it in conjunction with lions roaming round the mythical palace of Circe. It rushes on lambs and kids, like champions hurrying to the din of battle, and preys in conjunction with pards and jackals upon stags. The myrmidons whom Achilles leads to war are compared to a flock of wolves in a fine naturalistic picture; "like wolves, ravening after prey, around whose hearts is unspeakable strength, which, having pulled down a mighty horned stag in the mountains, tear it to pieces; and the face of them all is red with blood. Then they rush off in a flock to lap up the surface of the dark waters from a black-flowing fountain with slender tongues, vomiting forth clotted gore, and their courage within their breasts is dauntless, and their stomach is distended."¹ We hear of a wolf-skin as well as a dog-skin helmet, and of one made of a weasel's or more probably a marten's skin.²

The horse is constantly mentioned, but never seemingly as an animal to be ridden. A characteristic passage, the only one in which the animal

¹ "Iliad," xvi. 156.

² *Ibid.*, x. 335.

is named, introduces the as: "As when a sluggish ass, passing by a cornfield, hath overborne the boys, and many a cudgel has been broken round his sides, but he, entering in, ravages the deep crop while the boys beat him with sticks. Yet their strength is but feeble, and hardly have they driven him out when he hath taken his fill of the grain."¹ Mules were apparently much esteemed. There is a mention of them as being very strong and employed in dragging heavy beams; they draw Priam's chariot, having been given him as illustrious gifts by the Mysians. When Nausicaa takes her garments to be washed by the sea-shore, they are drawn thither in a waggon by mules.

The list of mammals in the two great Homeric poems, is completed by the hare, which is represented as torn by an eagle, as in the splendid chorus at the beginning of the Agamemnon of Æschylus, and by seals. A very curious passage relates how Menelaus, thanks to the help of Eidothée, daughter of Proteus, surprised that "old man of the sea" among his seals which slept around, "exhaling a bitter smell of the deeps of the sea." The stench of these animals is again described as being overpowering, until the goddess luckily bethought herself of rubbing a little ambrosia under the nose of each man, which effectually removed the ill favour.³ The poet probably alluded to the *phoca monachus* of the Mediterranean, or perhaps the *phoca vitulina* also seen at times in

¹ "Iliad," xi. 557.

² *Ibid.*, xxiv. 277.

³ "Odyssey," iv. 404, 436.

that sea. Seals are very numerous in the Caspian Sea, and are even found in the salt sea of Aral, as well as in the fresh-water loch of Baikal.

In a very curious passage of the "Odyssey" (xxiv., 6) reprehended by Plato in his "Republic," the souls in Hades are compared to bats, "which fly squeaking in the recesses of a marvellous cavern, when one has fallen from the rock out of the cluster," and Odysseus clings to the fig-tree of Charybdis like a bat.

Thus a Homeric household kept the same domesticated animals as we do at present—horse, ass, mule, sheep, oxen, pigs, and goats. It is singular, when the origin of the domestic fowl is remembered (the jungle fowl of India), that fowls are not named in the Homeric poems. The common supposition that these birds were brought westward by the primitive Aryans, seems therefore erroneous. They came through historic intercourse with the East, and in Homer's time there is plenty of evidence to show that this intercommunication of Europe and Hindostan had not yet begun.

Turning to reptiles, Proteus turns himself into them,

ὅσ' ἐπὶ γαῖαν
ἑρπετὰ γίγνονται.—*Odyssey*, iv. 417.

A dragon is one of these shapes. The dragon (or serpent) is represented as eating birds in other passages; causing a man to shrink back as he meets it in his path; an augury appears of "a high-flying eagle, on the left hand, dividing the people, bearing a monstrous bleeding serpent in its

claws, alive, yet gasping; and not yet had it forgotten to fight, for it smote the eagle which held it in the breast by the neck, bending itself back to do so. But the other let it drop to the ground, grieved at the anguish, and cast it down into the midst of the crowd, while it fled screaming on the wings of the wind." Snakes (or dragons) of "Cyanus" are fashioned gleaming like rainbows on Agamemnon's shield. A dying man lies like a worm;¹ while maggots, in another passage, are made to eat corpses.

With regard to fish and fishing, some singular facts appear in the Homeric poems. We will group them together without entering into modern views of classification, feeling sure that Homer regarded the whale, for instance, as a fish, and not a mammal. Fishers apparently cruised from island to island of the Ægean, for bodies of the slain wooers are delivered to the fisher-folk to be conveyed each to his own city in ships. The whales (or larger fish of the sea) are said to sport round Poseidon's chariot as he drives over the sea to recognise their king. A sea-monster (or κῆτος, which means any large fish or monster) pursued Hercules from the shore of the Troad to the plain in the myth. Fishes, and especially eels,² are several times spoken of as devouring the slain. Dolphins pursue and eat fish. Homer had noticed a fish "rise," though it is somewhat bewildering

¹ "Iliad," xiii. 654, σκώληξ; *ibid.*, xxiv. 414, ὄνυα.

² "Odyssey," xxiv. 418.

³ "Iliad," xxi. 353 (the eels and fish in the river Xanthus).

to find out what the following passage means. A hero is stricken and falls insensible, "as, under the ripple caused by the north wind, a fish leaps up on the weedy shore, and the dark wave covers it."¹ Probably it would be better rendered "a fish leaps up by the weedy submerged reef." As for the capture of fish, the Læstrygons hurl rocks at and kill the hapless mariners of Odysseus, and, "like men spearing fishes," they bear home their frightful meal. But angling was known to Homer; "as when a man sitting upon a projecting rock draws a sacred" (*i.e.* mighty) "fish to land from the sea with line and shining brass" hook.² The fishing-rod is not here named, and the "brass" hook was probably a hook of bronze, one of which is figured in Evans's "Bronze Implements." But in the "Odyssey" (and this seems a confirmation of the view that it is a later poem than the "Iliad") a rod is employed; "as when a fisherman on a projecting rock, with a very long fishing-rod letting down his baits as a snare to the little fish, flings into the sea a horn of an ox of the homestead, and then, as he has caught the fish, flings it gasping on the shore."³ Here a difficulty is contained in the use of the horn. It was probably a sheath coming over the bait, either to prevent its being washed off, or to protect it from crabs and the like.

These are the two chief authorities for fishing

¹ "Iliad," xxi. 692.

² *Ibid.*, xvi. 406.

³ "Odyssey," xii. 251. A cognate passage occurs in the "Iliad," xxiv. 80: Iris "plunged into the depths of the sea like a leaden plumb which in the horn of an ox of the stall entering the sea drops through it, bearing death to ravening fishes."

in the Homeric poems. The monster Scylla is said to fish, with her hands groping to catch dog-fish or dolphins. Plato notices that the Homeric heroes in their feasts never eat fish, and that their viands are always roasted, never boiled. It is a curious confirmation of the former statement that when the men of Odysseus fish in the Isle Thrinacia, with "crooked hooks," for fish or fowl, under the pressure of famine, their master will have nothing to do with it, but wanders off alone.¹ Yet in a picture drawn by the hero of a righteous and prosperous king, one touch is that "the sea for him gives fish."²

A singular passage occurs in the "Odyssey," v. 432, where Odysseus is compared, while in danger of drowning, to a cuttle-fish "which is dragged out of its hole, the many pebbles clinging to its suckers;" just in the same manner the hero's skin is torn off from his hands as he grasps at the rocks, and the mighty wave covers him. Again, a man stricken with a mortal wound, who falls headlong from his chariot, is jeered at in the "Iliad"—"if only he were in the fishy deep, this man would satisfy many men by grasping for oysters, plunging in from a ship, although it was stormy weather."³ Were it not for these curious

¹ Plato, "Repub.," 404, B.; "Odyssey," xii. 331.

² "Odyssey," xix. 113. That fish were eaten, too, appears from Od. xxii. 383, where Odysseus sees the slain wooers lie "like fish which fishermen have drawn from the grey sea in a many-meshed net to a hollow beach, and they all longing for the sea-waves are heaped upon the sand, and the sun shining on them takes away their life."

³ "Iliad," xvi. 745.

words, we should not know that oysters were a dainty so early as the Siege of Troy.

The zoology of the Homeric poems may be completed by a glance at the insects, etc., which are named by the poet. The "glancing gadfly" attacks the herds. One kind of worm or weevil attacks the wood of Odysseus's bow; another eats corpses. Locusts are represented fleeing from fire. Flies are often mentioned. A little one persistently attacks a big man, in one passage; in another, flies hum round the milk-pails in summer, or round the shepherd's pen. A beautiful simile represents Athene causing an arrow to fly off from Menelaus "as a mother drives off a fly from her child when enjoying a sweet sleep." Still more celebrated is the passage which introduces the favourite Greek insect, the chirping *tettix*; the old men of Troy are no longer able to fight, but are "excellent talkers, like tettixes" (grasshoppers), "which, in the thickets, sitting on a tree, send forth a thin clear voice."¹ Spiders even had been noticed by Homer, and were not deemed by him, any more than Shakespeare deems the toad, unworthy the dignity of poetry. The fetters which Hephæstus constructed in order to ensnare his erring wife were fine, yet strong as spider's web.² Round the neglected bed of Odysseus were foul spider-webs. Bees are mentioned as nesting in a hollow rock, not a beehive—another evidence of the antiquity of these poems. Evidently bees had not yet been domesticated. They made their

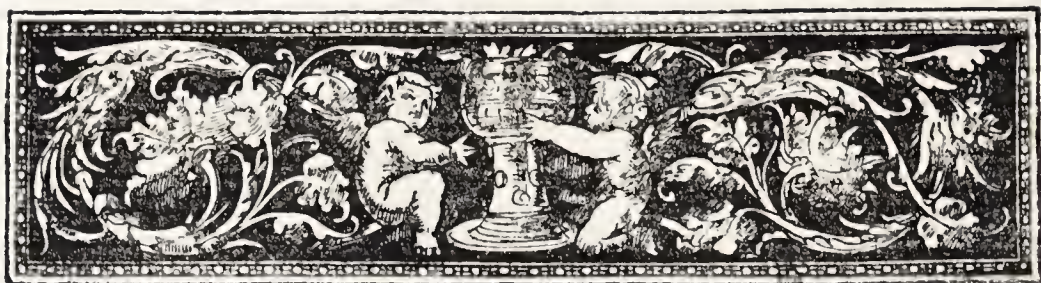
¹ "Iliad," iii. 151. ² "Odyssey," viii. 280; xvi. 35.

nefts, too, in the hollow cave at the landing-place in Ithaca. Wasps are named with them as making their abodes in a rugged path; and not quitting them at the approach of the spoiler, but fighting for their young. A passage which speaks of the Trojans issuing forth from their city, shows that boy-nature was with the Greeks much the same as it is with us; "they poured out like wasps dwelling near a road-side, which silly boys are accustomed to irritate, ever disturbing them as they live in their road-side homes, and cause a common evil to many; and if by chance a wayfarer going by should unwittingly disturb them, they with their strong hearts fly each one straight before it, and fight for their little ones."¹

In contemplating the wide range of Homer's natural history, and the evident love with which he dwells upon some of the nobler forms of animal life, we cannot help being struck with the prodigality of his allusions to animals. It shows the strength of his sympathies with outer nature. He may thus be advantageously compared with his successors in Epic poetry. Virgil lavishes his tenderness on birds and beasts in the "Eclogues" and "Georgics," but seldom names them in the "Æneid;" seldom, that is, as compared with the frequency with which they do duty as similes, or to enliven the Homeric landscapes. Save in his first book, or when treating more especially of creation, Milton is equally reticent. Indeed, the few allusions which our poet does make to animal life, or even to plants and flowers other than those

¹ "Iliad," xvi. 259.

suggested by his classical models, are somewhat surprising in one so fond of English landscape, as we know him to have been from his "Penferoso" and "Allegro," and from the records of his home-life which have been preserved. His susceptibility to music was extreme, and his gorgeous descriptions of musical harmony, hymns, and the like, have often been noticed. But it has not been remarked hitherto that his ear, rather than his eye, caught those reflections of nature which he has loved to reproduce in deathless verse. The crowing of the cock, singing of the lark, warbling of the nightingale, and similar sounds at once occur to the memory. This may account for the paucity of his notices of animated nature. The custom of welcoming the sounds, and songs, and cries of external nature through the ear must often have mercifully stood him in good stead when the affliction of blindness fell upon him in late life. It is obvious how distinct from both Virgil and Milton is Shakespeare in the manner he enlarges upon and welcomes into his verses the flowers, birds, and beasts of common life. Here, as also in his grasp of human greatness, and his delineation of the master-springs of action, he can only be compared with Homer. Both together are the most catholic of poets, in the depth of their sensibilities, the range of their insight, and the power and far-reaching grasp of their sympathy. The natural history of Shakespeare has been and still is studied from every point of view ; the above is at least a humble contribution towards the fuller enjoyment of Homer.



CHAPTER II.

GREEK AND ROMAN DOGS.

“Certes, the longer we live, the more things we observe and marke still in these dogges.”—PLINY, *Nat. Hist.*, viii. 40 (Holland).



THE Greeks and Romans were acquainted with the virtues of the dog, and valued it for its use in hunting and the care it took of the flocks or of the house, but usually regarded it, much as did the ancient Hebrews, as a type of shameless and audacious evil. So Helen, in the depths of her self-abasement, applies the comparison to her own life in the “Iliad,” and Hecuba, according to the myth, was changed into a dog. Wealthy men and kings had lapdogs, indeed, but took none of that pleasure in the affection and faithfulness of a sagacious animal which causes the dog to be so highly prized in modern life.¹ In augury dogs were unlucky, base animals (*obscænæ canes*—“Georg.,” i. 470), and

¹ See a noble passage on the difference between classical and Christian appreciation of Nature in Ruskin’s “Modern Painters,” vol. ii., p. 17.

Horace naturally introduces the dogs of the Suburra, the "artificers'" quarter and the most abandoned precinct of Rome, in a witchcraft scene of cruelty and uncleanness (Ep. v. 58). The most important star in the constellation of the dog was Sirius; "about four hundred years before our era, the heliacal rising of Sirius at Athens, corresponding with the entrance of the sun into the sign Leo, marked the hottest period of the year, and this observation being taken on trust by the Romans of a later epoch without considering whether it suited their age and country, the *dies caniculares* became proverbial among them, as the dog-days are among ourselves, and the poets constantly refer to the lion and the dog in connection with the heats of midsummer."¹ By way of contempt, the worst throw at the dice was known among the Latins as *canicula*, just as we brand bad Latinity as dog Latin. The porter at the entrance of both Greek and Roman houses was usually attended by a dog; hence the expression *cave canem*, which was proverbial among the Romans. Sometimes a painted dog with the warning was employed, as in a house which has been opened at Pompeii.

Greece and Rome do not appear to have known as a distinct breed that peculiar lightly built type of the family, like a greyhound, which was common in Egypt. It had much affinity both in character and derivation to the jackal. Dogs are not unfrequently found represented on the Babylonian

¹ "Dictionary of Antiquities," Art. "Astronomia."

cylinders, and one kind of dog is of this same greyhound type, while the other, known as the Indian dog, resembled our mastiff.¹ The excellence of the Spartan hound is often celebrated by the ancients, while the Molossi in Epirus possessed a breed of large dogs which was, if possible, still more renowned. Mr. Hughes, in his travels through Albania, found these dogs as numerous and fierce as they were in old days. The breed, he thought, had in no respect degenerated. He describes them as "varying in colour, through different shades from a dark brown to a bright dun, their long fur being very soft, and thick, and glossy. In size they are about equal to an English mastiff; they have a long nose, delicate ears finely pointed, magnificent tail, legs of a moderate length, with a body nicely rounded and compact."² Aristotle, speaking of these dogs, says that a difference of qualities is observable in the males and females, the latter being more gentle and tractable, and more easily taught. Therefore the females are more prized among the Spartan hounds as being of a nobler nature than males. The Molossians, he observes, are not better hunting dogs than others, but form excellent sheep-dogs, from their size and courage in attacking wild beasts.³ In another place he gives an excellent life-history of dogs, their generation, birth, dentition, and the like; "most dogs," he adds, "live

¹ Rawlinson's "Ancient Empires," ii., p. 494.

² Arnold's "Rome," ii., p. 438.

³ "Hist. An.," ix. i.

about fourteen or fifteen years, but some twenty; wherefore some think that Homer was quite correct in making the dog of Ulysses die in his twentieth year.”¹ He had noticed, too, that dogs dream, from their howling in sleep, as if they were then following the chase. We believe it, however, to be a kind of nightmare when dogs thus moan in sleep, in spite of the Laureate’s words—

“Like a dog he hunts in dreams.”

Pliny’s account of the dog may be here summarized.² Along with the horse he is the most faithful of animals to man. A dog has been known to defend his master from robbers as well as he was able, and on his protector being slain, to have watched his body, driving birds and wild beasts from it. Another dog in Epirus, on meeting his master’s murderer, by barking and biting compelled him to confess the crime. Two hundred dogs accompanied the king of the Garamantes from exile, ranging themselves in warlike order against all adversaries. Some nations have had armies of dogs, which never declined a combat, and never clamoured for pay. When the Cimbri were slain, their dogs defended the waggon of the tribe. When Jason the Lycian was killed, his dog refused to take food, and died of grief. Dogs have been known to throw themselves into the flames when the funeral pyre of their masters was kindled. He gives several other instances of the dog’s faithfulness and gentle domestic habits. A dog will

¹ “*Odysses*,” vi. 20.

² “*Hist. Nat.*,” viii. 40.

remember long journeys, and his memory is more retentive than that of any other creature save man. A dog's attack and rage may be mitigated by the person so assaulted sitting down quietly on the ground. This belief, as we have shown, is as old as Homer. The Indians are reported to cross their dogs with tigers; the first and second families which result are condemned as too savage, but the third generation is trained. So cunning are dogs, that in Egypt they run along, lapping the Nile as they go, lest by halting crocodiles should find an opportunity of dragging them in. When Alexander the Great was on his march to India, the King of Albania gave him a dog of wonderful size. Alexander, delighted at its appearance, commanded bears, boars, and stags to be slipped to it; but the creature lay motionless in supreme contempt, and at the slothfulness of so huge a form the king's noble spirit was aroused, and he bade the dog be killed. His friend now sent another dog of the same kind to him, with a message that it was only to be matched with lions or elephants, and not with small game. The dog soon killed a lion in the presence of Alexander, and was next matched against an elephant. First of all, with every bristle on its form erected, the dog bayed and attacked its enemy, first on one side, then on the other, slipping in and avoiding the elephant's stroke wherever an opening presented itself, like a good boxer, until the elephant grew dizzy by perpetually turning round to defend itself, and finally falling down, succumbed to its petty adversary.

Dogs frequently go mad during the thirty dog-days, and the disease must be counteracted by fowls' dung being mixed with their food, adds the grave historian, or if they be already suffering they must be treated with hellebore. According to Columella, if the tip of a dog's tail be cut off within forty days from its birth, it will never go mad. A dog has been known to speak by way of portent, just as a serpent ere now barked when Tarquinius Superbus was driven from the throne. "The best of the whole litter is that whelp that is last ere it begin to see, or else that which the mother carries first into her kennel."¹

Such were some current Roman beliefs about the dog. No more celebrated dog than Cerberus appears in classical mythology. Virgil speaks of his "three gaping mouths," and calls him "the gate-keeper of hell reclining in his blood-stained cave over half-eaten bones." Still more particular is the portrait which the wretched Culex, when untimely slain and sent down to Orcus, draws of him—"Cerberus barks at me with loud bayings, on both sides of whose neck twisted snakes bristle, and his bloodshot eyeballs flash forth a blaze of flame;" and he adds, "Trustful indeed was he who believed that Cerberus was ever mild-tempered."² Homer did not know his name, Cerberus, but speaks of Hercules dragging into daylight "the dog of mournful Hades," and in the *Odyssæy* Hercules in the Shades himself tells the story to

¹ Pliny, "Nat. Hist.," viii. 40 (Holland).

² "Georg.," iv. 483; "Æneid," viii. 296; "Culex," 219, 269.

Odyſſeus—"Zeus enjoined on me hard adventures, yea, and on a time he ſent me hither to bring back the hound of hell; for he deviſed no harder taſk for me than this. I liſted the hound, and brought him forth from out of the houſe of Hades; and Hermes ſped me on my way to the grey-eyed Athene."¹ The popular view is well expreſſed by Sophocles ("Œd. Col.," 1568), who ſpeaks of "the unconquerable brute who, as the tale runs, ſleeps in the gates of Hades, poliſhed by the entrance of ſo many ſouls, and, untamable guardian that he is, whines out of the grottoes." The conception of a dog which guarded Hades came to the clafſical nations, together with the fable of Charon and his boat, from the Egyptians. Orpheus is ſuppoſed to have introduced theſe myths into Greek fancy. Heſiod is the firſt Greek to mention the name and genealogy of Cerberus, and with him the dog is "unapproachable, open to no ſoothing, ravenous, the brazen-voiced hound of Hades, ſhameleſs and mighty with fifty heads."² After-poets ſpoke of him as three-headed, with ſerpents for his tail and mane. At length he becomes hundred-headed, and rivals Oriental monſters in prodigality of horrors. Hercules conquered another dog as well as Cerberus, born (like him) of Typhaon and Echidna, the dog of Geryones. It, too, from reſembling the guard of Hades, is ſometimes called Cerberus.

¹ "Iliad," viii. 367; and "Odyſſey," xi. 623 (Butcher and Lang's Tranſlation).

² Heſiod, "Theog," v. 388.

Now it is remarkable that there are two dogs of hell in the Vedic mythology, as yet unnamed. They guarded the road to Yama, the king of the departed. This second Greek dog, generally known as Orthros, is the exact copy of the Vedic Vriitha, and Vriitha (like Orthros) is connected with the dawn.¹

It is characteristic of the mild-tempered Tele-machus,

“Centred in the sphere
Of common duties, decent not to fail
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to the household gods,”

that Homer represents him, and him alone, in the “*Odyfsey*” as being followed wherever he walks by his dogs.² Of *Odyfseus* himself the poet uses a striking usage; “His heart within him barked” as he glared at the proud misdoings of the suitors; “as a bitch walking round her tender pups barks if she knows not the man who approaches, and is minded to fight, so did he growl inwardly when he beheld their evil works.”³ Besides *Argus*, most classical readers will remember the dog which barks at the end of *Virgil’s* incantation scene, and shows that the spells have worked upon the forgetful lover, “*Hylax in limine latrat.*” A poem by *Gratius Faliscus* in the Augustan age enumerates some twenty different sorts of dogs, but the British, Spartan, and Molossian dogs were the types best known to the ancients. Dogs were

¹ See *Max Müller’s “Selected Essays”* (Longmans, 1881), vol. i., p. 497.

² “*Odyfsey*,” xvi. 61, and xx. 145. ³ “*Odyfsey*,” xx. 13.

kept on the Capitoline as guards for the Temple of Jupiter, and it was told that while these raged at everyone else who approached, they suffered Scipio Africanus to draw near unharmed night after night when he was wont to enter the recesses of the Temple, and consult there with Jupiter on the destinies of the State. Dog-men with dog-like faces and barkings were fabled by the ancients to reside in North Africa and also on the Indian mountains, along with other monstrosities, such as one-limbed men, men with their heads below their shoulders, and the like.¹ Many of these reappear in the marvellous recitals told by the Mediæval travellers. The Greek name for a helmet shows what was the ultimate use of a dog, just as we have dogskin gloves. Virgil does not forget to recommend the dog to the care of husbandmen:

“Nor last, forget thy faithful dogs ; but feed
 With fatt’ning whey the mastiff’s generous breed,
 And Spartan race ; who, for the fold’s relief,
 Will prosecute with cries the nightly thief ;
 Repulse the prowling wolf, and hold at bay
 The mountain robbers, rushing to the prey.
 With cries of hounds thou may’st pursue the fear
 Of flying hares, and chase the fallow-deer ;
 Rouse from their desert dens the bristled rage
 Of boars, and beamy stags in toils engage.”²

As is his wont, Ælian gives many stories of dogs and curious scraps of folk-lore. They have been known, he says, actually to fall in love with men ; their affection is extreme, so when one Nicias slipped into a furnace his dogs remained,

¹ Aul. Gell., vii. 1, 8, and ix. 4, 9.

² Dryden, “Georg.,” iii. 404.

howling and dragging out bits of his clothing, by which it was found out how he had perished. Indeed, they insensibly acquire the type and habits of their masters. Thus the Cretans are light, supple, and agile, and so are their dogs. The Molossians are like their owners, most courageous, but when once a Carmanian and his dogs' ire are aroused they are most difficult to be appeased. The Hand of Glory and its use to credulous housebreakers has been described in most books of folk-lore. Ælian gives a somewhat kindred receipt by which a thief may silence the fiercest dog; viz., by holding to it a torch snatched from a man's funeral pyre.¹ It were long, however, to dwell on the superstitions and ancient folk-lore connected with the dog. We fear lest any further attempt to do so might be like inviting readers to a *prandium caninum* (to quote a last allusion belonging to the ancient dog); that is, to a teetotal banquet.² There are several chapters on the virtues and vices of dogs in Bochart's "Hierozoicon." Patroclus, in the "Iliad," possesses nine lapdogs (κύνες τραπέζῃες), and Achilles sacrificed two of them on their master's tomb ("Iliad," xxiii. 173). At Rome dogs were annually trussed upon forks, and while thus, as it were, crucified, were hung alive upon elder-trees, to deal exemplary justice upon the race which gave no alarm when the Gauls scaled the capitol. It seems, too, that the Romans, like the Chinese, valued the flesh of

¹ "De Nat. An.," i. 6, i. 8; vi. 53; iii. 2; i. 38.

² Aul. Gell., xiii., 30, 12.

puppies as an edible in old days. Hence whelps were sacrificed as an expiatory offering to the gods, following out the philosophy of sacrifice that men should offer to the gods whatever they most valued. "And verily at this day," says Pliny, "they make no scruple to sacrifice a yong whelp before it be full a day old ; yea, and at the solemne festivall suppers ordained for the honour of the gods, they forget not this day to serve up at the table certain dishes of yong whelp's flesh that sucke their dams." At the aditiales, the inaugural feasts of the magistrates, the flesh of puppies was ordinarily served. Perhaps the curious in such viands in the Western world might even now have no difficulty in procuring puppies, ready dressed for cooking, in the markets of Naples.¹

¹ Pliny, "Nat. Hist.," xxix. 4 (Holland).





CHAPTER III.

ANTIQUARIAN NOTES ON THE BRITISH DOG.

THERE are few more vexed questions in the archæology of natural history than the origin of the dog. The searcher of bone caverns cannot light upon any definite evidence, inasmuch as the skulls of dogs, wolves, and their congeners are much the same. The dog family (*canis*) makes its first appearance in the lower Pleistocene era, along with wolves, elephants, and oxen. There is no trace of dogs or other domestic animals having been known to or used by the cave-men; but in the Neolithic age the dog was occasionally employed for food, probably when old and past his work, a more humane, if less heroic, ending to a life of hunting than was that of the worn-out Argus when he once more saw his master ("Odyssæy," xvii. 326). In a Neolithic barrow, however, at Eyford, Mr. Greenwell found a dog which had been undoubtedly buried along with a woman whose skeleton was still, like that of the dog, *in*

situ. Its jaw showed it to have been about the size of an ordinary shepherd dog. The dog was abundantly represented in the Norfolk flint mines known as Grime's Graves.¹

The dog is met as the trusted friend of man when historical times commence; thus its commonness precludes much exact mention of it. Its existence was taken for granted. Theory, therefore, flourishes abundantly in connection with the early history of the dog, and much *à posteriori* argument. Such guesses must be taken obviously at their own value. Thus it does not follow that man in his primitive existence as a hunter was aided by the skill and speed of dogs, although Pope may find it convenient to suggest the notion to our minds by his well-known lines on the "poor Indian" and his dog. Many savage tribes which live by hunting, at the present day, never employ dogs. Nor need it necessarily be supposed that the primitive Aryan settlers in Europe brought dogs with them. Mr. Darwin has paid great attention to the question, and as he inclines to believe that different crossings of some *canis primitivus*, now lost, with wolves and jackals, may account for the existence of the numberless modern breeds of the dog, few will venture to contravene his supposition.² "Many European dogs," he observes, "much resemble the wolf," and all who have interested themselves in this question must

¹ Greenwell's "British Barrows," p. 736; and see Dawkins's "Early Man in Britain," pp. 87, 217, 304.

² See "Plants and Animals under Domestication," vol. i., cap. i.

have made the same remark to themselves with reference to some English sheep-dogs, and still more in the case of several Continental breeds of large dogs. Professor Owen, however, in his "British Fossil Mammals," ascribes certain canine bones discovered in an English bone-cave to *canis familiaris*, and these are probably the earliest authentic remains of the British dog. Besides the numerous varieties common to England and Scotland, the latter country possesses breeds unquestionably peculiar to itself, as the deerhound, Skye and Scotch terriers. Sir Robert Sibbald,¹ when enumerating the quadrupeds of Scotland in 1684, names the various kinds of dog as being, "cur, shepherd's dog, greyhound, beagle, bloodhound, molossus or English mastiff, setting-dog, water-spaniel, terrier, *canis Melitenfis*, a Messin or lap-dog." Dr. Caius,² writing in 1570, had scarcely been so particular to assign each dog to its own country, saying amusingly enough, when his words are contrasted with the sporting of the present day: "I cal them universally all by the name of Englishe dogge, as well because England only, as it hath in it English dogs, so it is not without Scottishe, as also for that wee are more inclined and delighted with the noble game of hunting, for we Englishmen are adicted and given to that exercise and painefull pastime of pleasure, as well for the plenty of fleshe which our Parkes and Forests doe foster, as also for the opertunitie and

¹ "Scotia Illustrata," Edinburgh, 1684, iii. 5.

² "Of Englishe Dogges," 1576 (reprinted 1880), p. 2.

convenient leifure which wee obtaine, both which the Scottes want."

Narrowing our investigations to the dogs of our own land, the next information which we obtain comes from Art. Dogs are frequently found represented on the Romano-Keltic pottery of England, especially on Durobrivan ware. These dogs commonly fall under one of two types; they are large and fierce, like our present bulldogs and mastiffs; or they resemble a fleet, slender hunting-dog, such as our greyhound. By comparison of the forms still remaining at the different museums on pieces of pottery, some particulars might be obtained respecting the various breeds of the early British dog, if we could be sure that the artist did not use conventional or imaginary types of dog-life. At this point, too, the well-known passages in the classics which refer to the excellence of English dogs come in. The larger and fiercer kinds were much employed both by the Roman sojourners in Britain and their countrymen at home in chasing the wild boar. Shepherd-dogs, too, may have been needed to tend the "*magnus numerus pecorum*" of which Cæsar speaks in our island. The luxury of the Roman capital at York would also be almost certain to demand the smaller breed for pets. Even in the Homeric times Kings kept them ("*Odyfsey*," xvii. 309). British mastiffs were much celebrated amongst the ancients. Martial says of another kind (xiv. 200):

"Non sibi sed domino venatur vertagus acer,
Illæsum leporem qui tibi dente feret."

Vertagus is said to be a Keltic word, though it somewhat suggests *verto* as its root, a dog which, like a greyhound and retriever combined, would pursue the windings of the hare's terrified flight, and then return when it had snapped up its prey, carrying it to its master. The *molossus* or mastiff was a word soon used in a much wider sense than its primitive meaning, (a dog belonging to the Molossi), warranted. Virgil's

“Veloces Spartæ catulos acremque molossium”
(*Georgics*, iii. 405)

is an instance of such use, while the other, the Laconian dogs, have not been forgotten by our own Shakespeare:

“My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind.”
(*Midsummer Night's Dream*.)

And he goes on to speak of their “tuneful cry,” reminding us of Walton's enthusiastic words: “What music doth a pack of hounds then make to any man, whose heart and ears are so happy as to be set to the tune of such instruments!” (“Compleat Angler,” i. i.)

Holinshed¹ inserts a curious chapter “of our English dogs and their qualities” in his “Chronicles.” “There is no countrie,” he says, “that maie compare with ours in number, excellencie, and diversitie of dogs.” Of all who have praised these creatures, Carden writes most marvels of them; “who is not afraid to compare some of them for greatnesse with oxen, and some

¹ “Chronicles” (six vols., 1807), vol. i. 386.

also for smalnesse vnto the little field-mouse." One of Holinshed's divisions of English mastiffs is sufficiently amusing: "Some doo both barke and bite, but the cruellest doo either not barke at all, or bite before the barke, and therefore are more to be feared than anie of the other." The whole chapter deserves perusal.

Turning to the numerous varieties of our dogs, it is worth while quoting some curious facts here from Mr. Darwin: "The bulldog is an English breed, and, as I hear from Mr. G. R. Jesse, seems to have originated from the mastiff since the time of Shakespeare; but certainly existed in 1631, as shown by Prestwick Eaton's letters. There can be no doubt that the fancy bulldogs of the present day, now that they are not used for bull-baiting, have become greatly reduced in size, without any express intention on the part of the breeder. Our pointers are certainly descended from a Spanish breed, as even their present names—Don, Ponto, Carlos, etc.—show; it is said that they were not known in England before the Revolution in 1688; but the breed since its introduction has been much modified, for Mr. Borrow, who is a sportsman, and knows Spain intimately well, informs me that he has not seen in that country any breed 'corresponding in figure with the English pointer; but there are genuine pointers near Xeres which have been imported by English gentlemen.' A nearly parallel case is offered by the Newfoundland dog, which was certainly brought into England from that country, but which has been since so much

modified that, as several writers have observed, it does not now closely resemble any existing native dog in Newfoundland.”¹

With regard to this variety of canine breeds, their extinction and the rise of others in their place, Mr. Darwin again says: “Through the process of substitution the old English hound has been lost; and so it has been with the Irish wolf-dog, the old English bulldog, and several other breeds, such as the alaunt, as I am informed by Mr. Jesse. But the extinction of former breeds is apparently aided by another cause; for whenever a breed is kept in scanty numbers, as at present with the bloodhound, it is reared with some difficulty, apparently from the evil effects of long-continued close interbreeding.”² Many an extinct breed (unless the animals existed only in the imagination of their painters) may be seen in Berjeau’s illustrations of dogs, taken from old sculptures and pictures. And every admirer of Dürer’s pictures must remember the curious hairy dog with large ears, something like an eccentric Scotch terrier, which appears in so much of his work; while at other times a dog is introduced which resembles a modern bull-terrier pup, both of which, however, it would be difficult to find examples of at the present day.

Mr. J. E. Harting considers that all the different breeds of our dogs may be conveniently deduced from the crossing of six large groups:

¹ “Varieties of Plants and Animals under Domestication,” i., p. 44.

² *Ibid.*, i., p. 45.

1, the wolf-like dogs; 2, greyhounds; 3, spaniels; 4, hounds; 5, mastiffs; 6, terriers. Professor Fitzinger enumerates more than 180 kinds of domestic dogs. Mr. Harting also notes that all the dogs of Gaul and ancient Britain had erect or semi-erect ears, like wild dogs.¹

A very important notice of British dogs, to continue our chronological survey, is recorded by Strabo, a contemporary of Cæsar. After speaking, like the latter, of the herds² of cattle to be seen in Britain, he adds that “hides, slaves, and *dogs of good breeding useful for hunting* are exported from it. The Kelts also use both these and the dogs of their own lands for warlike purposes.”³ Thus the geographer curiously enough comprises British dogs under the same two heads as, it has been seen, they are arranged by the early ceramic arts of Britain. Pliny tells us that the Britons were wont to breed their dogs from wolves.

The next citation demands a long leap, to Oppian's time, A.D. 140. Here we first meet with the term *agasseus*, which has been so variously interpreted. It is often rendered “beagle,” and by some “gazehound,” which seems to mean a large hound running by sight, like the Irish hound, or the present Scotch deerhound. And so Tickell writes:

¹ Davis Lecture, July 3, 1884.

² Compare, too, Eumenius, “Panegyric of Britain,”—“tanto læta munere pastionum.”

³ κόνες ἐνφυεῖς πρὸς τὰς κυνεγεσίαις, Κελτοὶ δὲ καὶ πρὸς τοὺς πολέμους χρῶνται καὶ τούτοις, κ. τ. λ. (See “Monumenta Historica Britannica,” 1848, vol. i., p. 141.)

“See’st thou the gazehound ? how, with glance severe,
From the close herd he marks the destined deer ?”

To our mind, however, Oppian’s description appears to apply to no British dog so well as to a Scotch terrier. We subjoin a translation of his sonorous Greek hexameters :

“There is a certain kind of whelps apt for tracking game, but of small power ; little in size, but worthy of much song, these the fierce tribes of painted Britons rear, and they are known particularly as *agassæi*. In point of size they resemble those good-for-nothing dainty household pets, lapdogs ; round in shape, with very little flesh on their bones, covered with shaggy hair, slow of vision, but armed on their feet with cruel claws, and sharply provided with many poisonous canine teeth. For its scenting powers, however, the *agassæus* is chiefly renowned, and it is excellent at tracking, since it is very skilled to discover the least footprint of any running game, and even to mark the very taint of its quarry in the air.”¹

Again the poverty of the times in literature compels us to leap over rather more than a century to Nemesianus. This Carthaginian poet also celebrates the hunting-dogs of Britain :

“Sed non Spartanos tantum tantumve Molossos
Pascendum catulos, divisa Britannia mittit
Veloces, nostrique orbis venatibus aptos.”²

We have another scrap relating to British dogs

¹ Oppian, “Cyneget.” i. 468. This description in the original is a very favourable specimen of Oppian’s style.

² Nemesiani, “Cyneget,” v. 123.

in Claudian (about A.D. 400). He speaks of the molossus "hunting with tender nose;" and again, of the "immortal molossus barking amid the thick mists furrounding the mountain-tops,"¹ which are probably not mastiffs in general (or from the context Britain might perhaps claim them), but strictly the dogs of the tribe Molossi. Soon afterwards, amid an enumeration of different dogs, he does specify the British mastiffs:

"Magnaque taurorum fracturæ colla Britannæ."

From these semi-classical notices the antiquarian student of English dogs will not find much to detain him till he comes to the early Forest Codes. Thus Cnut's "Forest Laws,"² in Canon 31, lay down that "no man of mean estate shall have or keep the dogs called by the English 'greyhounds.' A freeman may, provided that their expeditation shall have been effected in the presence of the chief forester."

Again, Canon 32 (translated by Manwood), allows "those little dogges called Velteres, and such as are called Ram-hundt (al which dogges are to sit in one's lap), may be kept in the forest, because in them there is no daunger, and therefore they shall not be hoxed or have their knees cut."

As another specimen of the ferocity of the ancient forest laws of our early kings, the following may be adduced: Canon 34, "If any mad dog

¹ "De Cons. Stilich.," iii. 294.

² "Ancient Laws of England," published by the Record Commission, 1841.

³ Manwood's "Forest Lawes," 1615.

shall have bitten a wild beast, then he shall make amends according to the value of a freeman, which is twelve hundred shillings. If, however, a royal beast shall have been killed by his bite, he shall be guilty of the greatest crime."

Much that is interesting connected with dogs used for falconry and the chase may be found in the "Boke of St. Alban's," 1486; but no English writer treated systematically of the different breeds of British dogs until John Caius, or Kayes, wrote his celebrated tractate "Of Englishe Dogges, the diversities, the names, the natures, and the properties." Having been addressed in Latin to the famous Conrad Gesner, in order to aid that naturalist in his history of animals, it was translated into English by "Abraham Fleming, Student," with the motto, "*Natura etiam in brutis vim ostendit suam*," and published in 1576.¹ A highly euphuistical dedication to his patron, the Dean of Ely, was prefixed by this same Fleming, who also perpetrated some verses on dogs on the reverse of the title-page, entitled "A Prosopopoicall speache of the Booke," which from their style and subject may most truly be termed one of the earliest specimens of doggrel.

One or two interesting facts attach to John Caius besides the authorship of the earliest book on English dogs. This "jewel and glory of Cambridge," as Fleming styles him, was born in 1510, and rose to be a distinguished physician.

¹ This has been reproduced in 1880 in a very convenient little volume (only changing the old English black-letter of the original into ordinary Roman type) at the *Bazaar* Office.

His name is still perpetuated in Gonville and Caius College at Cambridge, which, after its first foundation by Edmund de Gonville in 1348, was refounded by Caius, to whom it owes even more than to its original founder. A great portion of the existing College was built by Caius, and he was for many years first Fellow and then Master of it. Caius College is still the medical College of the University, and can in past years reckon many notable physicians amongst its sons, especially Harvey, the discoverer of the circulation of the blood. Perhaps even more honourable than this is the distinction Caius has obtained of being alluded to in no obscure manner by Shakespeare. "Master Doctor Caius, the renowned French Physician," is one of the characters in "The Merry Wives of Windsor" (1602); his servants are Mrs. Quickly and Rugby, while, characteristically enough, when angry with Sir Hugh, Shakespeare makes him say, "By gar, he shall not have a stone to throw at his *dog*" ("Merry Wives of Windsor," I., iv. 119). Here it may be remarked incidentally that Shakespeare, like the Bible, never says a good word for the dog, in spite of its fidelity and usefulness.

The many divisions of his subject which "that prodigy of general erudition" (as Hallam calls Gefner) was accustomed to make, doubtless caused the plan to find favour in the eyes of his disciple, Caius. As the archæology of the dog ends with his book, it is worth while giving an account of it for the benefit of those dog-lovers who have

not yet made the acquaintance of this “breviary of Englishe dogges,” as the author terms it. His design is to “expresse and declare in due order, the grand and generall kinde of English Dogges, the difference of them, the use, the propertyes, and the diverse natures of the same.” The treatise is especially valuable for giving us the chief kinds of dogs then known in England (from which the pointer, it will be noticed, is absent); but there are many quaint remarks and singular opinions also comprised in it. First of all, Caius makes three great divisions of the English dog :

“A gentle kind, serving the game, [*i.e.* a well-bred kind].

A homely kind, apt for fundry necessary uses.

A currishe kind, meete for many toyes.”

These are subjected to fundry more careful divisions; and, finally, the first class is subdivided into dogs for the chase and dogs useful in fowling, under which heads the animals themselves are one by one particularly described.

Of dogs useful in the chase, Caius enumerates “Harriers, Terrars, Bloudhounds, Gasehounds, Grehounds, Leviners or Lyemmers, Tumblers, Stealers.” The harrier is our modern hound; and, if the author’s classification of its duties may be trusted, was put in his day to very miscellaneous uses. It has “bagging lips, and hanging eares, reachyng downe both fydes of their chappes,” and was useful to hunt “the hare, foxe, wolfe, harte, bucke, badger, otter, polcat, lobster (!!), weasell,

and conny"—only "the conny," Dr. Caius explains, "wee use not to hunt, but rather to take it, somtime with the nette, sometime with the ferret." The terrar "creepes into the grounde, and by that meanes makes afrayde, nyppes and bytes the fox and the badger." It is evidently the original of the modern fox-terrier. On the bloodhound the author enlarges with evident delight. It is useful, he says, to track wounded deer or their poachers, and is kept "in close and darke channels" (kennels) in the day-time by its owner, but let loose at night, "to the intent that it myght with more courage and boldnesse practise to follow the felon in the evening and solitary houres of darknesse, when such yll-disposed varlots are principally purposed to play theyr impudent pageants and imprudent prances." These hounds are also much used, he tells us, on the Borders against cattle-lifters. The females are called *braches*, in common with "all bytches belonging to the hunting kinde of dogges" (conf. Hotspur's words, 1 Henry IV., iii. 1, "I had rather hear Lady, my brach, howl in Irish"). The gaze-hound (*agasseus*) he describes as a northern hound, which, "by the steadfastnes of the eye," marks out and runs down any quarry which it once separates from the herd. It clearly in this place resembles the present Scotch deerhound. The "grehounde" is "a spare and bare kinde of dogge, of fleshe but not of bone; and the nature of these dogges I find to be wonderful by y' testimoniall of histories," for which he cites Froissart. At the

present day greyhounds are generally supposed to be remarkably lacking in any other virtue than that of speed; all other points in their breeding are neglected to ensure this good quality. The lymmer (from *ligo*, because held in a leash) is "in smelling singular, and in swifteneſſe incomparable." It is little used in England at present, but may be seen in Brittany and on the Continent, where it is a useful creature in the miscellaneous collection of big hounds employed to hunt the wolf and boar. The *vertagus*, or tumbler, is another dog little known in England now. It was wont to frisk and tumble over and over, and by its antics fascinated rabbits and the like, until, gradually drawing nearer, it made a rush at them. It survives in the little dog employed by the few fowlers in the fens which yet exist, in order to lure the wild-fowl, who have been attracted by the decoy-ducks, further into the "pipe" of the net. "The dogge called the theeviſhe dogge" finds its modern exemplification in the "lurcher" of gipsies and poachers. "At the bydding and mandate of his maſter it ſteereth and leereth abroad in the night, hunting connyes by the ayre which is leavened with their ſaver, and conveyed to the ſenſe of ſmelling by the meanes of the winde blowing towards him. During all which ſpace of his hunting he will not barcke, leaſt he ſhould bee preiudiciall to his owne advantage."

Fowling dogs are the ſetter, the water-ſpaniel, and "the dogge called the fiſher, in Latine *canis piſcator*." Dr. Caius here ſomewhat unconſciouſly

imitates the famous chapter "Concerning Snakes in Iceland," for he is fain to confess, in his chapter on the "Fisher," that "assuredly I know none of that kinde in Englande, neither have I received by reporte that there is any fuche." He appears to confuse it with the beaver or otter, and writes as if the beaver were not yet extinct in England. The whole chapter reminds an angler of the celebrated question which is raised in Walton's book, whether the otter be beast or fish, solved by the huntsman, who avows that, at any rate, "most agree that her tail is fish."¹ Indeed, the author's wonderful divisions of his subject irresistibly suggest that Shakespeare had this book in his mind when he wrote :

"Ay, in the catalogue ye go for men,
As hounds and greyhounds, mungrels, spaniels, curs,
Shoughs, water-rugs and demi-wolves are cleped
All by the name of dogs ; the valued file
Distinguishes the swift, the slow, the subtle,
The house-keeper, the hunter ; every one
According to the gift which bounteous nature
Hath in him closed ; whereby he does receive
Particular addition from the bill
That writes them all alike."²

Next our author comes to "the delicate, neate, and pretty kind of dogges, called the spaniel gentle, or the comforter, in Latine *Melitæus* or *Fotor*" (from *Melita* or *Malta*, so answering to our *Maltese* dog). Dr. Caius had evidently no affection for these, and delivers himself of several caustic sentences, which may well be quoted for

¹ "Compleat Angler," i. 2.

² "Macbeth," iii. 2 (written in 1606).

the benefit of a good many “filly women” at present: “These dogges are litle, pretty, proper, and fyne, and fought for to satiffie the delicate-nesse of daintie dames and wanton womens wills instrumentes of folly for them to play and dally withall, to tryfle away the treasure of time, to withdraw their mindes from more commendable exercifes, and to content their corrupted concupiscences with vaine disport” (a felly shift to shunne yrcksome ydlenesse).” And again, “that plausible proverbe verified upon a Tyraunt, namely that he loved his sowe better than his sonne, may well be applyed to these kinde of people who delight more in dogges that are deprived of all possibility of reason, than they doe in children that be capeable of wisedome and judgement.”

Another chapter leads to the *canes rustici*—the dogs properly affociated by the ancients with Great Britain. And first comes the shepherd-dog, which, the author explains, need not be fierce, as, thanks to King Edgar, England holds no wolves. The mastiff, or bandog, which “is vaste, huge, stubborne, ougly and eager, of a hevy and burthenous body, and therefore but of litle swiftnesse, terrible, and frightfull to beholde, and more fearce and fell than any Arcadian curre (notwithstanding they are said to have the generation of the violent lion),” obtains a long notice with divers historical anecdotes. A good many cross-divisions follow in as many different sections treating of the “dogge-keeper” (or watch-dog); the

butcher's dog; the Moloffus; the dog that carries letters and the like wrapped up in his collar; the "mooner, because he doth nothing else but watch and warde at an ynche, wasting the wearisome night season, without slumbering or sleeping, bawling and wawing at the moone, a qualitie in mine opinion straunge to consider;" the dog that draws water out of wells; and the "Tyncker's curre," which many can yet remember drawing pots and kettles about the country. Most of these, adds the author, are excellent dogs to defend their master's property; and some are very "deadly, for they flye upon a man, without utterance of voice, snatch at him, and catche him by the throate, and most cruelly byte out colloppes of fleashe."

The next chapter contains an account of "cures of the mungrell and rascall sort," which may be called "waps" or warners. The turnspit and dancer (so called because taught to dance and perform antics for gain) are treated of herein. It would be unlike the author's age to forget the marvels of canine life, so his book concludes with a chapter "of other dogges wonderfully engendered within the coastes of this country; the first bred of a bytch and a wolf (*lyciscus*); the second of a bytyche and a foxe (*lacæna*); the third of a beare and a bandogge (*urcanus*)." A few closing words are entitled, "a starte to outlandish dogges," which bear hardly upon Scotch and Skye terriers, now so common as pets, so useful, and, it may be added, so faithful. Like Dr. Johnson, Caius evidently could not abide anything Scotch. "A beggerly

beast brought out of barbarous borders, fro' the uttermost countryes Northward, etc., we stare at, we gase at, we muse, we marvaile at, like an asse of Cumanum, like Thales with the brafen shancks, like the man in the Moone." And so we heartily bid farewell to Dr. Caius and his amusing tractate, stuffed full ("farfed" he would term it) of quaint sentiments and recondite allusions. It is a book which will delight all dog-lovers, independently of its value in continuing the history of their favourite animal from classical times. Perhaps it is worth adding that he repeats the old receipt for quieting a fierce dog which attacks a passer-by, viz., to sit down on the ground and fearlessly await his approach. Whether anyone has ever tried to put it in practice in real life we know not, nor have we ever cared to essay its virtues; but Ulysses certainly knew its value, and tried it to some purpose (see Plin., "Nat. Hist.," viii. 40; and "Odyssey," xiv. 31).

Chaucer, like Shakespeare, seems to have had no great affection for dogs, but has not forgotten them in his portrait of the Prioress, Madam Eglantine. Her humanity and tendernefs had to be described, and her love for her dogs gave the needful opportunity.

"Of smale houndes hadde she, that she fedde,
With rosted flesh, and milk, and wastel brede,
But sore wept she if on of hem were dede,
Or if men smote it with a yerde smert,
And all was conscience and tendre herte." (*Prologue.*)

In the story of "The Pardonere and Tapstere," another kind of dog is described:

“ A whelp
That ley undir a steyir, a grete Walfh dog,
That bare about his neck a grete huge clog,
Because that he was spetouse, and wold sone bite.”

Though the poems of Tickell and Somerville can scarcely, in point of time, be deemed old enough to merit an antiquarian's notice, yet are they sufficiently remote from the present generation's reading to warrant here a word or two, which may aptly conclude these notes. A fragment of a poem on hunting by the former, the friend and mourner of Addison, is marked with all his classic ease and grace. The following lines will illustrate at least one of Dr. Caius's dogs. Tickell bids his reader mark :

“ How every nerve the greyhound's stretch displays,
The hare preventing in her airy maze ;
The luckless prey how treach'rous tumblers gain,
And dauntless wolf-dogs shake the lion's mane ;
O'er all the bloodhound boasts superior skill,
To scent, to view, to turn and boldly kill.”

And what reminiscences of the “ Georgics ” breathe in this portrait of a hound ! We trust these samples may induce some readers to turn to a poet who has been too long unjustly neglected :

“ Such be the dog I charge, thou mean'st to train,
His back is crooked, and his belly plain,
Of fillet stretch'd and huge of haunch behind,
A tapering tail that nimbly cuts the wind ;
Trufs-thighed, straight-hamm'd, and fox-like form'd his paw,
Large legged, dry soled, and of protended claw ;
His flat wide nostrils snuff the savoury steam,
And from his eyes he shoots pernicious gleam,
Middling his head and prone to earth his view,
With ears and chest that dash the morning dew :

He best to stem the flood, to leap the bound,
And charm the Dryads with his voice profound ;
To pay large tribute to his weary lord,
And crown the sylvan hero's plenteous board."

Gervase Markham's quaint picture of the "water dogge" may well be compared with this (see his "Hunger's Prevention," London, 1621, in which are a good many more notices of dogs): "His Necke would bee thicke and short, his Brest like the brest of a shippe, sharp and compasse; his Shoulders broad, his fore Legs straight, his chine square, his Buttockes rounded, his Ribbes compasse, his Belly gaunt, his Thyes brawn, his Gambril crooked, his posteriors strong and dewe clawde, and all his four feete spacious, full and round, and closed together like a water duck" (chap. ix.).

Much curious matter on dogs may be picked out of George Turberville's "Book of Faulconrie," published in 1575; and his "Noble Arte of Venerie," in which he largely compiled from Du Fouilloux and Jean de Clamorgan. Harington, Glanville, Barlow, and William Harrison, in Holinshed's "History" ed. 1586, cap. 7, may also be consulted with profit. Some of this old-world learning has been brought together by Mr. G. R. Jesse in his "Researches into the History of the British Dog" (London, 1866). All these authors love dogs as fervently as the Indian hero, Yoodhist'huru. When the chariot of Indru was waiting to convey him to heaven, he came attended by his dog. "I don't take dogs," said Indru. "Then I don't go," replied Yoodhist'huru. The

dog, however, turns out to be Humu, a god, and the difficulty was got over (see Berjeau's "Varieties of Dogs in old Sculptures," etc., London, 1863, p. 1).

Somerville's four books in blank verse on the chase are, perhaps, too lengthy for readers who tire quickly of Milton; but the adventurous explorer will find some landscapes in them which betray no mean descriptive skill, lit up every here and there by a flash of imagination. He, too, was evidently a dog-lover; and several good descriptions of the hounds which found favour with huntsmen at the beginning of the last century attest his enthusiasm for hunting. After his verses no further excuse can be found for continuing the subject, though it is worth while to add that a few notices on dogs are contained in Pepys's "Diary."





CHAPTER IV.

THE CAT.

FAMILIAR to all as is the domestic cat, a number of interesting questions are involved in its early history. A distinguished biologist has recently taken it as the type of the *felidæ*, and filled a goodly volume on it without by any means exhausting the subject.¹ The origin of the large family of cats, both fossil and living species, is traced in geologic time by Lyell and Owen to the Pliocene Period, when, together with the *canidæ*, cats also came into being. Professor Owen enumerates as fossil species *F. Spelæa*, great cave tiger, whose remains have been found in Kent's Hole and elsewhere; *F. Pardoides*, of which one tooth was found by Mr. Lyell in the Red Crag, Newbourn, in 1839; *F. Catus*, the wild cat, probably identical with the present wild cat of the north; and a huge sabre-toothed feline animal as large as a tiger, and, to judge from its teeth, more

¹ St. John Mivart's "The Cat" (Murray, 1881).

destructive, *Machærodus latidens*. Its remains have also been found in Kent's Hole and at Kirkdale.¹ Mr. Mivart, however, who has more recently investigated the subject, enumerates, with descriptions, fifty distinct species of living cats, and adds, "A much larger number of species have probably existed in the past." The great cat, known as the cave lion (*F. Spelæa*), lived in England in middle and late pleistocene times; but Mr. Mivart traces the ancestry of cats to a much more distant period. "The remains of certain large cats have been found in pliocene, and miocene, and even in eocene deposits, which differ from any existing cats in the enormous size of their upper canine teeth, e.g., *machærodus*, *hoplophoneus*, *pseudælorus*,"² etc. There are signs that the cat was domesticated in the bronze period.

It is commonly supposed that the wild cat is the ancestor of our domestic cats, but this is certainly a mistake.³ Few animals are more irreclaimable than the wild cat. One which the Duke of Sutherland, as head of the Clan Chattan, or Clan of the Cats, exhibited in a strong cage at the Crystal Palace some years ago during a show of cats, flew fiercely at all who approached it. No amount of kindness appears to tame it; and the progeny invariably revert to a wild life in the

¹ Owen, "History of British Fossil Mammals and Birds." (Van Voorst, 1846), p. 173.

² Mivart, *ut sup.*, pp. 431, 432.

³ Prof. Owen thinks that "our household cat is probably a domesticated variety of the same species which was contemporary with the spelæan bear, hyæna and tiger." ("British Fossil Mammals," p. 173.)

woods as soon as possible. Besides which, the period of gestation of the wild cat is sixty-eight days, twelve days longer than that of the domestic animal.¹ The late Mr. F. Buckland, too, pointed out, as a striking difference between it and the domestic animal, that its intestines are much shorter than those of the latter animal. Thus they were found to be only five feet in two specimens of the wild cat, whereas they would probably be three times that length in the domesticated creature.² This statement, however, requires confirmation. In the spring of 1884 a supposed wild cat was shot in a large extent of woodland near Wragby, in Lincolnshire, called Bullington Wood. Wild cats are supposed to have been extinct in this county from quite the beginning of the century. This cat was stuffed, and seen by many others as well as the writer. It might either be a true wild cat—in which case it had escaped from confinement—or else was a survival of the true old British wild cat. It is curious, in connection with this, that the last locality in which the kite was seen in this country was in these very woodlands; and the marten is yet found there. It seemed the general opinion that this was a true wild cat; with the writer, however, another alternative found favour—that it was a descendant, perhaps in the fourth or fifth generation, from an escaped domestic cat. It is a singular fact that escaped cats and

¹ Mivart, *ut sup.*, pp. 2-6.

² "Logbook of a Fisherman" (1875), p. 252. Darwin, "Plants and Animals under Domestication," ii. 292.

their progeny have much tendency to revert in colour and appearance to the type of the true *f. catus*. Its colour is a dark-grey, or grey-brown striped with black. The cat in question seemed to the writer too rich in colour, with an under-shade of yellow, which was suspicious. Colour, however, is proverbially deceitful in natural history investigations. The head was too round, the legs too slender, and the tail not sufficiently abrupt; and these are important structural differences. *Adhuc sub judice lis est*. Two or three other hints, moreover, seem to point to the conclusion that the domestic cat is a foreign importation. The curious penalty, for instance, denounced in the old Welsh laws against him who should kill the king's cat, "the keeper of the royal granary," appears to suggest that a cat was a somewhat rare and valuable animal. The offender was compelled to pay as much corn as would cover the cat's body when held up by the tip of its tail. Dick Whittington and his cat is another indication of the foreign extraction of the animal. Being sent to Barbary, it sold for a good price, and enriched its master.

All the evidence points to Egypt as the country where cats were originally domesticated in the West, though it was known in India 2,000 years ago. They are wrong who derive the cat's appearance in Europe from Persia, and state that its name Puss is a mere diminutive of Perse. Dr. Brugsch-Bey shews that one of the titles of Osiris was Bafs, the cat (or leopard), whence, with more probability, comes our word Puss. His wife, Bast (the

“biffat” or tabby cat of the modern Arabians), gave her name to Bubastis (Pi-Bast, the City of Bast).¹ The parent of our cat is to be sought, either in the *felis bubastes* or the *f. caligata* (*maniculata*), found at present wild in Egypt. Probably the latter, with an admixture of other strains, is the original stock. It is a native of Northern Africa, about a third smaller than our wild cat, and of a yellowish colour, somewhat darker on the back and whitish on the belly. Thus Egypt, the granary of the ancient world, naturally was the first country of the Western world to domesticate the cat. It is mentioned in inscriptions as early as 1684 B.C., and was certainly kept as a pet in Egypt 1,300 years B.C. The earliest known representation of the cat as a domestic creature is on a tablet of the eighteenth or nineteenth dynasty at Leyden, wherein it appears seated under a chair. It was venerated in certain districts of ancient Egypt:

“Illic *æluros*, hic piscem fluminis, illic
Oppida tota canem venerantur, nemo Dianam.”
(Juv., *Sat.* 15, 7.)

¹ See Burton, “Land of Midian” (Kegan Paul and Co., 1879), vol. i., p. 113. The above learned Egyptologist would derive Bacchus and his priests, the Bacchi and Bacchantes, from the Ofiric term, Bafs. It is at least a curious fact that the dress of these priests consisted of a leopard’s skin.

“According to Lenormant, the cat does not appear on Egyptian sculpture earlier than the thirteenth dynasty (2020, B.C.), and therefore the credit of its domestication is due to the inhabitants of the Upper Nile. This process, remarks Hehn, must have taken a long time, but it was thoroughly successful in the end.” (W. R. S. Ralston, *Nineteenth Century*, Jan., 1883.)

The goddess Pasht or Bubastis, the goddess of cats, was under the Roman Empire represented with a cat's head, that creature being esteemed an emblem both of the sun and the moon by the ancient Egyptians, partly from its eyes being supposed to vary with the course of the sun, partly because they were thought to wax and wane with the moon. Dr. Birch states that the earliest representation of the cat with which he is acquainted and of whose date he is certain, is to be found on a tomb in the Berlin Museum, apparently of about 1600 B.C. It also appears in hunting-scenes of the eighteenth dynasty, and in rituals written under that dynasty, but probably repetitions of a much earlier text. At times it is in a boat with the hunters, but eager to be allowed to spring into the thickets of aquatic plants; and again it is represented among the birds struck down by the fowler, and apparently taught to work either as a springer of the game or as a retriever. When the sacred cats died, their bodies were always embalmed, and behind a temple at Beni Hassan, dedicated to Bubastis, are pits containing a multitude of cat mummies.¹ When Herodotus visited Egypt, he was naturally struck with the exaggerated reverence paid to cats, and devotes a quaint chapter to them which is well worth translating. Two facts come out in it; first, a certain scarcity of cats even in Egypt; and secondly, the sacredness of the animal.

¹ Mivart, *ut sup.*; and Wilkinson, "Ancient Egyptians," i., p. 236.

“Though the Egyptians have many domestic animals, there would be many more did not the following circumstances occur. When kittens are born, their mothers are unwilling to consort with the males, so the Toms have devised a plan to remedy this. They carry off and kill the kittens; but though they kill, they do not eat them. Then the mothers, having lost their kittens, naturally long for others (the cat being an animal fond of young ones), and so again seek the males. When a fire breaks out, a divine impulse comes over the cats. The Egyptians separate and keep watch over them, neglecting to put out the conflagration; but the cats, slipping under and leaping over the men, spring into the fire. When this happens great grief takes possession of the Egyptians, and wherever cats have thus perished of their own accord, all the inmates of the house shave off their eyebrows only; but whenever a dog has died, their whole body and head. After their death, cats are borne off into sacred abodes, where, after having been made into mummies, they are buried in the City Bubastis” (Book ii. 66). Diodorus says that he saw the Egyptians murder a Roman who had accidentally killed a cat.

Chabas says that cats are not seen on any of the hieroglyphic tables illustrating the life of the Egyptians, but are often employed as the equivalent for the sound “meou.” The cat dates from the most ancient times in that country, and is mixed up with the oldest legends. This shews why it was

frequently made into a mummy. It probably had a mystical significance, for—"dans quelques-unes des peintures parvenues jusqu'à nous, les anciens Egyptiens se montrent accompagnés de leurs chiens et de leurs singes favoris, auxquels ils donnaient des noms comme on le fait aujourd'hui; le chat n'y figure jamais." The camel, again, is never represented on any of the surviving monuments, yet it was known to the Egyptians in the time of Abraham (Chabas, "*Études*," pp. 406, 408: Paris, 1873).

Cats and hares share an equal notoriety in the annals of witchcraft. "When one of us" (says one of the Culdean witches) "is in the shape of a cat, and meet with any others of our neighbours, we will say, 'Devil speed thee, go thou with me,' and immediately they will turn to the shape of a cat and go with us." There was a large assembly and fight with such cats at Scrabster, in the north of Scotland, 1718. The marvellous recital tells how one Mr. William Montgomery valorously stuck one with his dirk through the hinder quarters to a chest, "yet after all she escaped out of the chest with the dirk in her hinder quarters" (J. H. Burton, "*Criminal Trials in Scotland*," vol. i., p. 290: London, 1852). Freja, in the "*Northern Mythology*," rides to the battlefield in a waggon drawn by two cats, this animal being sacred to her. Hence it is popularly assigned to hags, witches, etc. When a bride goes to her wedding in fine weather the Germans say, "She has fed the cat well;" *i.e.*, not offended the

favourites of the love-goddes (Grimm's "Northern Mythology," translated by Stallybrafs, i., p. 305.)

In spite of the proverb:

"Catus sæpe satur cum capto mure jocatur,"

Mr. St. John Mivart is of opinion that the cat, when tormenting a mouse, is not doing so from native cruelty, but in order to keep her claws in order, just as her big brother, the tiger, is compelled to scratch the bark of trees, especially the Indian fig-tree, in order to cleanse his claws. Japanese cats, like those of the Isle of Man, are tailless. The cat is a favourite on tavern signs; our own Cat and Fiddle matching the Flemish "Le Chat qui Fume," and the equally well-known "Chat de St. Jean" with its long tobacco-pipe.

Cats were not domestic animals with the Hebrews, any more than dogs. It is not surprising, therefore, that they are passed over in silence in Holy Scripture. In Baruch vi. 22, indeed, is a curious passage which occurs in what purports to be a letter of Jeremiah to the captives about to be led into Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. In it the prophet tells them of the senseless idols they will there see, and adds, "upon their bodies and heads sit bats, swallows, and birds, and the cats also;" but the passage is in all probability a forgery of the first century B.C.

From Egypt cats seem to have been introduced into Greece, and thence into Rome. A fresco painting of a cat was discovered at Pompeii. These animals were not much prized, however, by either Greeks or Romans. The only pas-

fage in the classics where the word which has passed into our "cat" occurs is in an epigram of Martial (xiii. 69):

"Pannonicas nobis nunquam dedit Umbria *cattas*."

Phædrus has a fable of an eagle, a cat, and a fow which inhabited the top, middle, and base of an oak, and clearly uses the word *felis* of our well-known cat. One line exactly expresses the cat's nocturnal habits:

"Evagata noctu suspenso pede." (*Fab.*, 2, 4.)

Compare, too, the proverb, "Felem Minervæ."

The connection of cats and Egypt comes out again in a passage of Ovid ("Met.," v. 330). A muse sings:

"How the gods fled to Egypt's slimy soil,
And hid their heads beneath the banks of Nile,
How Typhon from the conquered skies pursued
Their routed godheads to the seven-mouthed flood;
Forced every god, his fury to escape,
Some beastly form to take or earthly shape;
Jove (so she sung) was changed into a ram,
From whence the horns of Libyan Ammon came;
Bacchus a goat, Apollo was a crow,
Phœbe a cat, the wife of Jove a cow."

(Maynwaring's Translation.)

The peculiar roughness of the tongue in the feline race generally is pointed out by Pliny (xi. 37, 65). He adds: "With what silence, with what light footsteps do cats creep upon birds! how suddenly, when they have spied them, do they spring out upon mice!" (x. 73, 202). Arguing from this and similar passages, the late Prof. Rolleston and others believed that the do-

nocturnal animal of the Greeks and Romans, for which we now use the cat, was the white-breasted marten. The word *feles*, it is true, is commonly used for the weasel; but, on the other hand, its Greek synonym *ἄλιουρος*, according to the best derivation by Buttemann, applies exactly to the wavy motion of the tail so peculiar to the cat family. The English term "cat" probably comes from the Latin *catus* (cunning). In Anglo-Saxon documents it is found with the spelling "catt." "When Julius Cæsar landed here," says Mivart (*ut sup.*, p. 2), "our forests were plentifully supplied with cats, while probably not a single mouser existed in any British town or village." The wild cat is at present restricted to the extreme north and north-western districts of Scotland, having become extinct in England, and never seemingly having existed at all in Ireland. But in the Middle Ages it was common in the wilder parts of England, as its fur was commonly used to trim dresses. John, Earl of Morton, in a charter granting immunities to free tenants outside the Regard of the Forest of Dartmoor, says: "Quod capiant capreolam, vulpem, *cattum*, lupum, leporem, lutrum ubicunque illa invenerint extra reguardum foreste mee,"¹ as if the wild cat were not uncommon at the end of the twelfth century. Pope Gregory the Great had a tame cat, and cats were often inmates of nunneries in the Middle

¹ See Rowe's "Perambulation of Dartmoor" (1848), p. 263. The Charter is in the possession of the Dean and Chapter of Exeter.

Ages. Its flesh was interdicted as food, having been a favourite dish with the heathen Northmen.

A curious parallel to Whittington and his cat occurs in a petition of the year 1621 of one William Bragge to "the Company of the East India and Sommer Islands," claiming £6,875 for divers services rendered.¹ Among their recital is found: "Item, more for 20 Dogges and a greate many Catts which, under God, as by your booke written of late, ridd away and devoured all the Ratts in that Iland [Bermuda], which formerly eate up all your corne, and many other blessed fruites which that land afforded. Well, for theis, I will demand of you but 5lb. a piece for the Doggs, and let the Catts goe—100lb. os. od." Hone relates that on the Festival of Corpus Christi at Aix in Provence, "The finest Tom cat of the country, wrapped in swaddling clothes like a child, was exhibited in a magnificent shrine to public admiration. But at the Festival of St. John poor Tom's fate was reversed. A number of the tabby tribe were put into a wicker-basket, and thrown alive into the midst of an immense fire, kindled in the public square by the Bishop and his clergy. Hymns and anthems were sung, and processions made by the people in honour of the sacrifice."² It is singular to find these traditions of the sacredness of the animal lingering in Europe in the Middle Ages.

The cat is a celebrated animal in folk-lore and proverbs.³ Perhaps Fuller's saying is one of the

¹ *N. and Q.*, 3rd S., 2, 345.

² "Every Day Book," vol. i., p. 758.

³ Darwin, "Origin of Species," p. 9, ed. 6.

most ungallant of the latter: "A cat has nine lives, and a woman has nine cats' lives." Almost equally paradoxical with this proverb appears at first sight what is nevertheless regarded as a true law of nature, that cats which are entirely white, and have blue eyes, are generally deaf; but it has lately been stated that this peculiarity is confined to the males. "Care killed the cat" is another proverb which reflects upon the easy lives led by these animals. The circumstances of their owners do not affect them, and a cat is a saturnine creature, equally happy and at home whatever befalls her master. The familiar presence of the cat on every hearth comes out in "a cat may look at a king." Why Cheshire cats should always grin is somewhat inscrutable, but so says the Scotch proverb.¹ Shakespeare was aware of the cat's weakness for fish, but its unwillingness to wet its feet in catching them, and applies it finely. Lady Macbeth taunts her husband when he hangs back from the murder with

"Letting I dare not wait upon I would,
Like the poor cat i' the adage,"

—referring to the mediæval adage,

"Catus amat pisces sed non vult tingere plantas;"

and the same poet well knew the nature of the true wild cat:

"He sleeps by day
More than the wild cat."—(*Merch. of Venice*, ii. 5.)

¹ In Sicily the cat is sacred to St. Martha. He who kills a cat will be unhappy for seven years. Europe has always regarded the cat as a diabolical creature. A Russian proverb says that a black tom cat at the end of seven years turns into a devil. (Ralston, *ut sup.*)

To show the manner in which one part of nature influences and acts upon others until the fauna or flora of a district may be changed by what seem, taken separately, insignificant causes, it is worth while quoting a speculation of Darwin, in which the cat plays a conspicuous part. "The common red clover is only visited by humble-bees, as hive-bees cannot reach the nectar. The heartsease (*viola tricolor*) is another plant which also seems to owe its fertilization only to humble-bees. It may be regarded, therefore, as highly probable that if the whole genus of humble-bees became extinct or very rare in England, the heartsease and red clover would become either very rare, or would altogether disappear. The number of humble-bees in a district depends in a great measure on the number of field-mice, which destroy their combs and nests. It is estimated that more than two-thirds of them are thus destroyed all over England. The number of mice is largely dependent upon the number of cats, and it has been found near villages and small towns the nests of humble-bees are more numerous than elsewhere, which is attributed to the number of cats which destroy the mice. Hence it is quite credible that the presence of a feline animal in large numbers in a district might determine, through the intervention first of mice and then of bees, the frequency of certain flowers in that district."¹

"There remains to be told but one more cat story of importance. It claims to be of recent

¹ See "Origin of Species," *ut sup.*, p. 57.

date, and it conveys the useful moral that they who attempt to benefit their fellow-men must be prepared for disappointment. A few years ago, if newspaper reports may be believed, a ship was sent to the colony of Tristan d'Acunha with a score of cats on board. These animals were a present from the Lords of the Admiralty, to whom it had been reported that the island was mouse-ridden. When the vessel arrived the Governor of the colony begged that the cats might be kept on board. It was quite true, he explained, that the island was infested by mice, but it was also overrun by cats. And in Tristan d'Acunha, cats, in consequence of some strange climatic influence, always abandoned mousing, a fact which accounted for the abnormal development of the mouse population. So that a gift of cats to Tristan d'Acunha was even less likely to be welcome than a present of 'owls to Athens.'"¹

The unhappy reader, however, will now turn upon the author with Bertram's words: "I could endure anything before but a cat, and now he's a cat to me!" ("All's Well that Ends Well," iv. 3, 265).

¹ From an admirable article by W. R. S. Ralston (*Nineteenth Century*, Jan. 1883) on the folk-lore of cats, called "Puffs in Boots."





CHAPTER V.

OWLS.



THE disrepute into which owls have so largely fallen with the ignorant appears to be due to the Romans, rather than the Greeks. In any dull country, indeed, where the nights are long and dark, the nocturnal cries and strange activity of the owl after dusk, its glaring eyes and frequently horned ears, will naturally impress the superstitious; but what may be called its literary heritage of hatred and infamy comes to it from Italy. The owl in Homer is simply "a long-winged bird," and appears in company with "falcons and chattering sea-crows, which have their business in the waters"¹ in the fair wood of alder and sweet-smelling cypress which surrounded the pleasant cave of Calypso. No ill-fame has yet attached itself to the bird. But reference to Pliny at once shows the evil character it possessed at Rome, and gives the reason for it. The city was indebted to

¹ "Odyssey," v. 66 (Butcher and Lang).

the Etrurians for its science of augury, and it had pleased the Etrurian *haruspices* that the owl should be regarded as a bird of ill-omen. So Pliny says: "The great horned owl is of mournful import, and more to be dreaded than all other birds in auspices connected with the state. It inhabits waste places, and those not merely deserts, but dreadful and inaccessible localities; being a prodigy of night, making its voice heard in no manner of song, but rather in groaning. So whenever seen in cities or in daylight it is a direful portent. Perchance it is not so much fraught with horror when seen sitting on private houses. It never flies where it lists, but is always borne along in a slanting direction. Having once entered the capitol, the city was purified on account of it in the same year. There is an unlucky and incendiary bird, owing to which I find in the 'Annals' that the city was repeatedly purified, as when Cassius and Marius were consuls, in which year also it was cleansed, as a horned owl had been seen. What this bird is I cannot find out, nor does tradition tell. Some say that any bird is an incendiary, if it appears bearing a coal from the altars. Others call it a *spinturnix*" (i.e., an abominable bird), "but neither can I find anyone to tell me what kind of bird this is. Another confession of general ignorance is that it was called by the ancients 'a bird which forbade things to be done.' Nigidius terms it a thievish bird, because it breaks the eggs of eagles. There are, besides, several kinds, treated of in the Etrurian

ritual, which have now, marvellously enough, died out, although those birds which man's appetite lays waste increase. One Hylas wrote very skilfully concerning omens, and tells that the owl, with several other predatory birds, comes out tail first from the egg, inasmuch as the eggs are weighed down by the heavy heads of the chicks, and consequently present the tails of these birds to the cherishing influence of the mother's body.

"Crafty is the mode in which owls fight other birds. When surrounded by a great number, they fling themselves on their backs, and fight with beak and claws, their bodies being closely contracted, and thus protected on all sides. The kite will help them, from a natural kinship in robbery, and shares the combat. Nigidius says that owls sleep for sixty days during winter, and have nine different cries."¹

It is small wonder that if these were the kind of popular beliefs at Rome the unlucky owl obtained an ill-character in Latin, and transmitted the evil heritage to the Romance languages. Virgil, with his strong poetic feeling, introduces the bird fitly enough among the portents which presaged the death of Dido, when abandoned by Æneas. "The lonely owl would frequently lament in funereal strains from the house-tops, and prolong her cries into a wail of woe" ("Æneid," iv. 462). Again, the same poet shews the triumph of good over evil when the return of settled fine weather discomforts the owl's melancholy prog-

¹ Pliny, x. 16-19.

noctics ; “in vain at such a time does the owl as she watches sunset from some roof-top ply her strains of woe far into the night ” (“Georg.,” i. 402). In another poem he dwells upon the hoarse notes of the owl as compared with the wild swan’s sonorous, musical song, “certent et cygnis ululæ” (“Ec.,” viii. 56) ; the very name which he gives the unlucky bird expressing its monotonous hootings. A common Greek name for the bird was “scops,” which also expresses its hooting. The ordinary word for an owl in Greek, however, comes from the glaucous, or glaring character of the eyes in this bird. From the gleaming, flashing eyes which the poets attributed to Minerva, the owl became her bird, and is often represented in ancient art as her symbol. The *strix passerina* (*glauclidium passerinum* of Linnæus) was thus regarded at Athens as the bird of wisdom, and from the abundance of owls at that city¹ arose the Greek proverb “owls to Athens,” of similar meaning with our “coals to Newcastle.” The drachma, an Athenian coin, bore Minerva’s head on one side, and on the other an owl, and this device continued throughout the whole history of the Athenian coinage. Naturally enough these coins were called “owls.” The Greek tetradrachms also bore the impress of an owl, and, in the palmy days of Athens, had universal currency. Curiously enough, Mr. R. F. Barton, among the coins which he discovered at

¹ *Athene noctua* and *Athene glaux* also owe their names to Athena and her city, Athens.

Maghair Shu'ayb (on the east of the Gulf of Akaba), in his exploration of the land of Midian, found that "the gem of his whole collection was a copper coin thickly encrusted with silver, proving that even in those days the Midianites produced 'smashers;' similarly, the Egyptian miners 'did' the Pharaoh by inserting lead into hollowed gold. The obverse shews the owl in low relief, an animal rude as any counterfeit presentment of the *Σεῶν γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη* ever found in Troy. It has the normal olive-branch, but without the terminating crescent (which, however, is not invariably present) on the proper right, while the left shews a poor imitation of the legend ΑΘΕ(NH). The silvering of the reverse has been so corroded that no signs of the goddess' galeated head are visible. My friend, Mr. W. E. Hayns, of the Numismatic Society, came to the conclusion that it is a barbaric Midianitish imitation of the Greek tetradrachm."¹

The owl became in good truth a messenger of death to Herod Agrippa, who was smitten of God for not giving Him the glory, and died at Cæsarea (Acts xii. 23). "Presently his flatterers cried out," says Josephus,² "one from one place, and another from another; (though not for his good), that 'He was a god;'" and they added, "Be thou merciful to us. For although we have hitherto known thee only as a man, yet shall we henceforth own thee as superior to mortal nature."

¹ "The Land of Midian" (Kegan Paul and Co., 1879). Vol. i., p. 93.

² Whiston's Translation. "*Antiq.*," Bk. xix. 8, § 2.

Upon this the King did neither rebuke them, nor reject their impious flattery. "But as he presently afterward looked up, he saw an owl sitting on a certain rope, over his head; and immediately understood that this bird was the messenger of ill tidings, as it had once been the messenger of good tidings to him, and fell into the deepest sorrow." Severe pain at once came upon him, and he acknowledged that Providence was thus reproving the lying words which he had accepted from the people, and died five days afterwards. This passage is also noticeable for a critical battle which has been fought over it; as if Eusebius, the ecclesiastical historian, had falsified these words of Josephus to identify the owl with the angel of the Lord mentioned in the Book of Acts, the word "messenger" in the above citation being in the original *angelus*, angel or messenger. Whiston has a satisfactory note on the point.

North America admires, but Arab folk-lore bears hardly upon the owl. Among the Red Indians the bird is believed to lament the golden age when men and animals lived in perfect unity until it came to pass that they began to quarrel, when the Great Spirit in disgust sailed across the seas, to return when they had made up their differences. So every night in the great pine forests the snowy owl repeats his "Koo, koo skoos!" "Oh, I am sorry!" "Oh, I am sorry!"¹ The fine owl of the Sinaitic Peninsula, however, is known by the

¹ Leith Adams's "Field and Forest Rambles in New Brunswick," p. 58.

Arabs as "the Mother of Squeaking," and is believed to suck out children's eyes. The owl and the hyena are used by the natives as charms; the burnt feathers of the former, and the boiled flesh of the latter animal being considered invaluable specifics for numerous disorders. In other parts of Arabia the hooting of the owl portends death, and the cry "Fât, fât" is interpreted "He is gone, gone!"¹ An owl appeared before the battle with the Parthians, in which Crassus fell, and was supposed by the ancients to presage his death. Of all these beliefs old Sir T. Brown said well, "which, though decrepit superstitions and such as had their nativity in times beyond all history, are fresh in the observation of many heads, and by the credulous and feminine party still in some majesty among us. And therefore the emblem of superstition was well set out by Ripa in the picture of an owl, an hare, and an old woman."²

The discussions which have arisen from Dr. Schliemann's discoveries of the so-called owl pottery at Hissarlik have been so frequently renewed of late that it is only necessary to allude to them here. People had an opportunity of judging for themselves in the exhibition of relics from old Troy at South Kensington. Not uninteresting is a favourite Arabic apologue, though derived probably from the Persian. The Sassanian King of Persia, Bahram, was so indifferent to the welfare of his subjects that half the towns and villages in his

¹ Burton's "Land of Midian," vol. i. 142.

² "Vulgar Errors," v. 22.

kingdom became ruined and deserted. One night, while on a journey accompanied by a Mobed, or Magian priest, he passed through some depopulated villages, and heard an owl screech, and its mate answer him. "What do the owls say?" asked the King. The Mobed answered, "The male owl is making a proposal of marriage to the female, and the lady replies: 'I shall be most delighted, if you will give me the dowry I require.' 'And what is that?' says the male owl. 'Twenty villages,' says she, 'ruined in the reign of our most gracious Sovereign Bahram.'" "And what did the male owl reply?" asked Bahram. "Oh, your Majesty!" answered the priest. "He said, 'That is very easy; if his Majesty only lives long enough, I'll give you a thousand.'" The lesson, says history, was not lost upon the King.

In French folk-lore the owl has acquired an evil name because, when the wren had brought down fire from heaven, while the other birds in their gratitude contributed a feather apiece to replace its scorched plumage, the owl refused, alleging that she would require all her feathers during the approaching winter. On this account it has been condemned to eternal seclusion during the warm day, and to perpetual suffering from cold during the night. This explains why "the owl, for all its feathers, was a' cold" on St. Agnes's Eve, and why the other birds pester it if it appears in sunshine. An omelette made of owl's eggs is said to be a cure for drunkenness.

The poor bird, under its French name *effraie*, carries a continual remembrance of the old belief that it boded misfortune, *effraie* being a corruption of *fresaie*, which is connected with the Latin *præfaga*.¹ It is curious that the Hindoos make an owl sit upon the "inviolable tree" of their mythology (as if it were connected with life), near the tree which bears the *soma*, or drink of immortality. Returning once more to the Western world, the legend runs that the eldest daughters of the Pileck family, in Poland, are transformed into doves if they die unmarried, into owls if married, at their death. The student of language and myths will find much food for thought in these notices of Shakespeare's "clamorous owl." There is a Flemish painter, Henri de Bles, born 1480, who always painted an owl in his pictures, and was thus called "Civetta." A picture bought for the National Gallery in 1882, from the Hamilton collection, was said to be by this painter, but closer inspection showed that the so-called owl was a vulture.

Until the rise of a school of nature-loving poets, beginning with Gilbert White at the end of the eighteenth century, the owl was only treated by the poets as a bird of night and terror. It was a synonym for all that is most ill-boding and fear-some. In the so-called Chaucer's "Romaunt of the Rose," the owl "of deth the bode ybringeth."

¹ See the *Saturday Review*, Feb. 4, 1882, on Rolland's "Faune Populaire de la France," and Kelly's "Indo-European Folk Lore," p. 75.

In Shakespeare it is "the baker's daughter," by a seeming confusion of folk-lore with the woodpecker. It is "the fatal bellman, which gives the stern'st good-night;" the "boding scritch owl;" the "ominous and fearful owl of death." When it appeared by day (as the barn-owl often does), its character only seemed the blacker:

"The bird of night did sit
Even at noonday upon the market-place,
Hooting and shrieking."—(*Jul. Cæs.*, i. 3.)

King Lear, when he would fly from men to dwell among the direst and most cruel of creatures, determines "to be a comrade with the wolf and owl" (ii. 4). Spenser also places the poor owl in ill company, when, as Guyon and the Palmer failed together:

"Suddeinly an innumerable flight
Of harmefull fowles about them fluttering cride,
And with their wicked wings them ofte did smight,
And fore annoyed, groping in that grievely night.

"Even all the nations of unfortunate
And fatall birds about them flocked were,
Such as by nature men abhorre and hate;
The ill-faste owle, death's dreadfull messengere;
The hoars night-raven, trump of doleful dreere;
The lether-winged batt, dayes enemy;
The ruefull strich, still waiting on the bere;
The whistler shrill, that whofo heares doth dy;
The hellish harpyes, prophets of sad destiny;

"All those, and all that els does horror breed,
About them flew, and fil'd their sayles with feare."¹

Another and a different view of the bird is taken by Daniel. This scene of the little birds flouting

¹ "Faerie Qucene," ii. xii. 35.

the owl, is one that must have been noticed by most lovers of the country:

“Look how the day-hater, Minerva’s bird,
 Whilst privileged with darkness and the night,
 Doth live secure t’ himself, of others feared.
 If but by chance discovered in the light
 How doth each little fowl (with envy stirred),
 Call him to justice, urge him with despite,
 Summon the feathered flocks of all the wood,
 To come to scorn the tyrant of their blood !”¹

Owls had a distinct medicinal value with the Romans, as indeed had almost every bird and plant known to them. In this connection folklore is seen allying itself with science, as yet crude and fanciful. “The feet of a schriche Owle burnt together with the herb Plumbago, is very good against serpents. But before I write further of this bird,” adds Pliny, “I cannot ouerpasse the vanitie of Magicians which herein appeareth most evidently; for ouer and besides many other monstrous lies which they haue deuised, they giue it out, that if one doe lay the heart of a Scrich-Owle on the left pap of a woman as she lies asleep, she will disclose and utter all the secrets of her heart; also, whosoever carie about them the same heart when they go to fight, shal be more hardie, and performe their deuoir the better against their enemies.” Owl’s eggs were reported to cure all defects and accidents to which the hair was liable; but, asks Pliny indignantly, “I would faine know of them what man euer found a Scrich-Owle’s

¹ “History of the Civil Wars,” 99.

nest and met with any of their egges, considering that it is holden for an vncouth and strange prodigie to haue seen the bird itself? And what might be he that tried such conclusions and experiments, especially in the haire of his head?"¹

¹ Pliny, "Nat. Hist." (Holland), xxix. 4.





CHAPTER VI.

PYGMIES.

“Do you any ambassage to the Pigmies?”
(“Much Ado,” ii. 1.

IN the myths of antiquity, and in modern folk-lore, pygmies hold an equally honoured place. Those of early Greek legend are own brothers to the trolls and elves of Northern mythology; while their descendants, the pixies of to-day, yet dance among the moonlit glades of Devon and Cornwall in the belief of the Western peasantry. Pygmies first appear in the “Iliad,” iii. 2-7: “The Trojans advanced with clangour and a war-cry, like birds; like the clamour of cranes aloft in heaven, when flying from winter and a mighty storm, loudly clamouring, they wing their way to the ocean streams, bringing slaughter and death to the Pygmies.” Aristotle (“Hist. An.,” viii. 14, 2) amplifies this passage, which he evidently had in his remembrance: “Cranes

migrate from the Scythian regions into the marshes of Upper Egypt where the Nile takes its rise. The Pygmies dwell in these parts; the tale told of them is no myth, but in good truth they are a nation of small stature, as the story runs, both they and their horses. They live after the fashion of Troglodytes." Strabo naturally dissents from the common belief: "The Ethiopians lead a wretched life, and are for the most part naked, and roamers from place to place. Their flocks consist of small sheep, goats, oxen, and dogs. They are morose, too, and warlike, in consequence of their small stature. Perhaps it was from the short stature of these men that the story of the Pygmies was devised and struck out. No one worthy of credit relates that he had actually seen them."

The ordinary story appears in Pliny that they sit upon rams and she-goats, and, armed with arrows, in the spring-time descend in a body to the sea, and eat the eggs and young ones of the cranes, an expedition which occupies three whole months. He places the Pygmies among the furthest nations of India. With him agrees Ctesias, who states that in the centre of India are men of a dark hue called Pygmies, using the same language as the rest of the Indians. They are covered with long hair, and very small, the tallest being two cubits in height, but most of them only one and a half cubit in stature. Such stories probably helped Swift to his Lilliputians, who also bore bows and quivers full of arrows.

"The nation of the prettie Pygmies," adds Pliny,¹ "enjoy a truce and cessation from armes every yeare, when the cranes, who use to wage war with them, be once departed and come into our countries." Vespasian, at the dedication of the Colosseum, presented a spectacle to the people of a battle between cranes and a number of dwarfs who imitated Pygmies.

Aulus Gellius gives a similar account of Pygmies, placing them in India, and making the tallest of them but two feet and a quarter in height.² Hanno, in his "Periplus," places them in the Atlas mountain, and states that they "run faster than horses," and are Troglodytes. Messrs. Hooker and Ball, during their recent travels in the Great Atlas, observed several Troglodytic habitations. Juvenal amusingly comprehends all the learning of the ancient world on Pygmies in "Sat." xiii. 167-170, and of their army says, "Tota cohors pede non est altior uno" (173).

Sir Thomas Browne has no difficulty in his "Vulgar Errors" (Book iv. 11) in disposing of these fables after his own fashion. Having mentioned the above passages, and several others from ancient poets and writers, he concludes that what was "only a pleasant figment in the fountain, became a solemn story in the stream, and current

¹ "Nat. Hist.," x. 24 (Holland).

² ix. 4, 10. Pliny asserts that the Pygmies live among the marshes where the Nile rises, curiously anticipating modern geographical research. The Troglodytes, he places on the Arabian Gulf next the Ichthyophagi, "of wonderful swiftness, swimming like fish" (vi. 30, 34).

still among us." Most of his scorn is poured out upon Aristotle, who can afford to smile at it however, "wherein indeed Aristotle plays the Aristotle, that is, the wary and evading assertor; for though with *non est fabula*, he seems at first to confirm it, yet at the last he claps in *ut aiunt*, and shakes the belief he put before upon it." Much of his own chapter is taken up with a consideration of Ezekiel xxvii. 12, where, in the Vulgate, the Pygmies appear as a translation of "Gammadim," which our version translates "men of Arvad:" "Et Pygmæi qui erant in turribus tuis pharetras suas suspenderunt in muris tuis per gyrum." It is difficult, indeed, to connect the Pygmies with the city of Tyre, to which these words refer; some might call it impossible, were not the commentary of the ingenious Forerius extant. He considers that "the watchmen of Tyre might well be called Pygmies, the towers of that city being so high that, unto men below, they appeared in a cubital stature." But the Pygmies, it will be seen, are to be found in much stranger places than ancient Phœnicia; suffice it now to state Sir T. Browne's cautious judgments on them: "Since it is not defined in what dimensions the soul may exercise her faculties, we shall not conclude impossibility; or that there might not be a race of Pygmies, as there is sometimes of giants; but to believe they should be in the stature of a foot or a span requires the preaspection of such a one as Philetas the poet in Athenæus, who was fain to fasten lead unto his feet, lest the wind

should blow him away." Of course Milton, with his classical lore, has not forgotten

"That small infantry
Warr'd on by cranes."—(*Par. Lost*, i. 575.)

For a later disquisition on Pygmies, the reader may be referred to Ritson's dissertation, published at the end of his "*Fairy Tales*" (London, 1831). He, too, quotes the chief classical allusions to them, adding (from Ctesias): "Of these Pygmies the King of the Indians has 3,000 in his train, for they are very skilful archers. They are, however, most just, and use the same laws as the other Indians." Sir John Maundeville plants them near the "gret ryvere that men clepen Dalay;" calls them three spans high, "thei lyven not but six year or seven at the moste, and he that lyveth eight year, men holden him there righte passyng old. These men be the worcheres of gold, sylver, cotoun, fylk, and of alle such thinges of ony other that be in the world," with more marvels.¹ One Mr. Grose, says Ritson, author of "*A Voyage to the East Indies*" (London, 1772), had heard of Pygmies in Coromandel, but soon after, to his amazement, he discovered them in Great Britain. "At the north poynt of Lewis there is a little ile called the Pygmies ile, with ane little kirk in it of their own handey-wark, within this kirk the ancients of that countrey of the Lewis says, that the said Pigmyes has been eirdit thair. Maney men of divers countreys has delvit upe dieplie the

¹ "*Voiage and Travail*" (London, 1727), p. 232.

flure of the litle kerke, and i myfelve amanges the leaue, and has found in it, deepe under the erthe, certain banes and round heads of wonderful little quantity, allegit to be the banes of the faid Pigmies, quhilk may be lykely, according to fundry historys that we reid of the Pigmies; but i leave this far of it to the ancients of Lewis.”¹

In the *Academy* (March 19, 1881) may be found an account of three modern Pygmies from Africa, the only representatives of their race now living in Europe. The two boys are at present being brought up under the protection of Count Miniscalchi at Verona, while the girl is less fortunately placed at Trieste. The elder boy, Thibaut, now measures 1·42 mètre (55·9 inches) in height, and is believed to have reached his greatest stature. He is probably about nineteen years of age. Chairallah, on the other hand, is still growing, and at present measures 1·41 mètre (55·5 inches); he is supposed to be about fifteen years of age. These lads have very pronounced dolicocephalic skulls, with the characteristic three-lobed form of nose. Their prognathism is very striking; the mouth large; the lips thick; the teeth stout, well-separated, and exceedingly white. Tufts of black woolly hair have appeared upon the cheeks, the chin, and the upper lip of Thibaut. Chairallah, on the contrary, shows no trace of hair upon the face; his visage, however, has greatly lengthened with age. They have forgotten both

¹ “Description of the Western Isles of Scotland.” By Donald Monro (ed. 1784), p. 37. Martin says of this that the natives call these the bones of Lustbirdan (*i.e.* pygmies).

their native Akka and the Arabic which they learnt when young, but speak, read, and write Italian. The girl can neither read nor write, but can speak Italian, and a little German, languages which she hears daily around her. She is supposed to be about fifteen years of age. Her present height is 1.34 mètre (52.7 inches¹). All these three Akkas have good health, and are generally well-behaved, but have exceedingly childish tastes.

If these different accounts of ancient and modern Pygmies be weighed, it will be found that either monkeys or aboriginal Troglodytic tribes are described under that name. The Book of Job² alludes to the Horites and other Troglodytic races of Palestine, whose haunts were in the rocks of Edom on one side of the world. On the other side, the neolithic Iberian race, the Troglodytes of Dordogne, the Picts, makers of the so-called Picts' houses, the primal natives of the Atlas, and the like, have been esteemed Pygmies by the races which succeeded them. In India the dark skins and flat Mongol features of many of the aboriginal hill and jungle tribes being distasteful to their Aryan conquerors, led the latter to transform them into goblins, pygmies, or demons. In just the same manner the aborigines of Scandinavia became the elves and gnomes, the mischievous trolls or pygmies of Icelandic and Norse tradition. Doubtless the scorn of the conquerors

¹ Cnf. Juvenal, "Satires," vi. 504. "Breviorque videtur Virgine Pygmæa."

² Cap. xxx. 6, 7.

as well as their proud supremacy were thus flattered. In depreciating their forerunners, they exalted themselves. The process by which these Indian and Oriental fables passed into Europe, and what in some cases is still more important, the Buddhist origin of these Oriental fables themselves, has been pointed out by the late Theodor Benfey. It is curious that the ideas of classic poets, on the degeneracy of the human race, are being every day contradicted by the discoveries of science. Not least among these corrections of popular beliefs is the evidence for the gradual amelioration of mankind to which the legends and history of so-called Pygmy tribes testify. They corroborate the testimony of revelation and the insight of modern poets, more true in this particular than their brethren in the past, that there is a golden future for the race, an "increasing purpose running through the ages." Material progress, in short, means in most cases the moral and mental advancement of man. Civilization is a light whose radiance is ever piercing further and further into the realms of darkness:

"Wait ; my faith is large in Time,
And that which shapes it to some perfect end."

As for any other theory, "a pygmy's straw doth pierce it" ("King Lear," iv. 6).





CHAPTER VII.

ELEPHANTS.

“Th’ unwieldy elephant,
To make them mirth, us’d all his might, and wreath’d
His lithe proboscis.”—(*P. L.* iv. 345.)



THE elephant family runs far back into the pliocene age. It attained a large range in post-pliocene times. At present, it is well known, we possess two main branches of the stem in the Indian and African elephants, which are well marked off from each other. The latter kind is not now tamed, but it is supposed that the elephants used by the Carthaginians were of this species. Singularly enough, the extinct proboscideans also fall under two divisions, the elephant proper, of which the mammoth (*elephas primigenius*) is the type; and the mastodon, distinguished by its udder-like teeth, adapted for bruising coarser vegetable substances, and the presence of two tusks in the lower jaw of both sexes. Species of the mastodon lived in Europe, Australia, and America. Owen's *M. Angustidens* has been found in our English Crag,

and the bones of *M. giganteus*, from the United States, may be seen set up at the British Museum. This creature is 20 feet 2 inches long, and 9 feet $6\frac{3}{4}$ inches high. Dr. Falconer discovered the remains of several species also in the Sewalik Hills, East India. There, too, he found bones belonging to six species of true elephant. Reverting to the mammoth, there is no need to dwell upon the discovery of the carcase of one almost wholly preserved, flesh, skin, and hair, in 1799 on the banks of Lake Onkoul in Siberia. The mammoth was very widely distributed over the globe, being a pre-glacial as well as a post-glacial inhabitant of Great Britain. Numerous remains of it have been found in Norfolk and Suffolk, and dredged out of the German Ocean. It was the latest form of the extinct elephants. Its tusks have for ages in their fossil state supplied almost all the ivory that Russia uses. Another instance occurred in 1846 of a frozen mammoth being thawed out of the ice, but it could not be preserved. Lieutenant Benkendorf and a party of Cossacks, in that year discovered it on the banks of the Indighirka, standing upright in the ice-bound tundra in the place where it had been bogged, and narrowly escaped being themselves swept out into the Arctic Sea, as the thaw proceeded, together with the mammoth, which actually was so lost. Several points in the history of the mammoth show that it probably was the ancestor, geologically speaking, of the present Indian elephant. The oldest carving known, found in the Madelaine Cave, in the

Dordogne, by M. Lartet, represents the mammoth on a piece of its own ivory.¹

The royal pupil of Aristotle put him in possession of a good deal of knowledge on the elephant. The philosopher speaks of it, from fifteen which were captured at Arbela, as the tamest and mildest-tempered of creatures, full of intelligence, and living to the age of 120 or 200 years; but at its best when 60 years old. He knew its abhorrence of cold, too. Preconceived notions, however, come in when he states that it passes through rivers, wading in them as far as the end of its trunk allowed, for it breathes through this, and cannot swim on account of the bulk of its body. On the contrary, the elephant is a capital swimmer, and delights in nothing so much as deep water. The Mahouts frequently cause their charges at the present day to swim over wide rivers, and even the Ganges. He speaks also of the time of *must* in male elephants; how, at those periods, they are in a state of madness, and knock over houses as if they were badly constructed, and commit all manner of excesses. "They tell that scantiness of food renders them tamer, and by bringing up to them other elephants they restrain them by ordering these to beat them." He speaks, too, of olive oil being given elephants to expel any piece of iron they may have accidentally eaten; and has a chapter on their ailments. The food of an elephant is measured by him almost with the exactness with which the keep of Jumbo was cal-

¹ Wilson, "Prehistoric Man," i. p. 107.

culated at £500 per annum, when that much-puffed beast was sold to Barnum. It can eat, he informs us, nine Macedonian bushels at a meal, and ere now had been known to drink fourteen Macedonian measures at once. He notes, also, that some are fiercer and more courageous than others, a fact well known at present to all Indian tiger-hunters, and that they push over palm-trees with their foreheads, then walk up them and eat what they desire of them. This, too, is a habit confirmed by all modern travellers. His account of elephant-catching comprises in one short paragraph the whole of the best modern books on the subject, whether Tennant or Sanderfon. "The chase of elephants is on this fashion. Men mount some of the tame and courageous elephants and pursue the herd. When they have come up with it, they bid their own animals to beat the wild ones with their trunks, until they give in through faintness. Then the elephant-taker leaps on one of them and guides it with his weapon. After this it soon becomes mild and submissive. When the elephant-taker has mounted them, all are in subjection ; but when he has dismounted some remain so, while others return to a wild state. While these are raging, they fetter with chains their front legs, in order that they may be quiet. Both small and great are thus captured."¹

The first twelve chapters of Pliny's eighth book of "Natural History" contain almost all the facts as well as the fancies known to the ancients about

¹ Ar., "Hist. Anim.," ix. 33 ; vi. 17 ; viii. 25, 11 ; ix. 2.

elephants, folk-lore and science not yet being separated in the case of natural productions. Certain tribes of Africa subsisted by hunting elephants, he tells us, and the city Ptolemais was built by Philadelphus for the sake of enabling him to hunt elephants.¹ Certain of these African elephants are said to assemble by fours and fives in the maritime districts of Ethiopia, and having interlaced their legs and trunks, with erect heads and ears, to commit themselves to the waves, by which they are floated over to the finer pasturage of Arabia. As for the Indian elephants, life is made a burden to them by the huge serpents which wrap their coils round them. The elephants, however, undo these coils by their trunks, whereupon the serpents fasten round them by the tail, and thrusting their heads into the elephant's nostrils, stop their breath, and sting them internally to death. Another account tells how the serpents lie in wait in the water where elephants come to drink, and then, seizing their trunks, sting them in the ear, the only part which they cannot defend by their trunks. The Troglodytes, too, lie in wait up trees till the last of the herd is passing underneath. Upon this they drop, and seizing its tail with the left hand, hamstringing it with a sharp weapon in their right. A similar mode of stealing on elephants and hamstringing them is still pursued in the East. Their battles with Pyrrhus showed the Romans that an elephant's trunk could easily be cut off; and the

¹ "Nat. Hist.," vi. 34.

celebrated combat of a Roman captive with a Carthaginian elephant in the arena before Hannibal on the latter's promise that the slave's life should be spared did he prove victor, conclusively proved that these creatures need not be greatly dreaded in war. The Romans were never fair to Hannibal, and Pliny cannot refrain from adding that Hannibal was so chagrined at this discovery that he sent horsemen, when the man had departed, to waylay and slay him. For accounts of Pompey and Cæsar exhibiting shews of elephant-combats in the circus, and a multitude of curious particulars, we must be content to refer the reader to the above citation, only warning him that many of the stories told by Pliny require qualifying with the warning of the showman in a modern menagerie, who pointed out the porcupine, and observed: "Buffon says that he shoots his quills; Buffon's a liar!" Ælian, Strabo, and Arrian are full of details on elephant-catching and taming. Cicero was present at a *venatio* given by Pompey, B.C. 55, when twenty elephants were exhibited in the circus, and killed by darts. He adds that "a great admiration for the huge beasts fell on the spectators, and no delight was taken in their death. Moreover, a certain feeling of pity followed the spectacle, the populace not being able to withstand the opinion that there was a kinship to man in the sagacious creature."¹

Elephants were first seen in Italy at the invasion

¹ See Lord Cockburn on "The Chase," *Nineteenth Century*, Dec. 1880; and cnf. Juvenal, "Satires," xii. 101-114.

of Pyrrhus, B.C. 280. He defeated the Romans at the Siris in that year by their aid. Indeed, the Roman army was only saved from annihilation in that combat by one of the elephants, whose trunk had been cut off by a Roman soldier, turning back upon and throwing his own party into confusion. Ere long the Romans learnt to use them in war, while exhibitions of their sagacity in time of peace frequently amused the populace at Rome. It is curious that the elephant is never represented among the Egyptian hieroglyphics, although it was perhaps an inhabitant of Upper Egypt in early times, where the island Elephantine remained as an evidence of the fact.¹ Rawlinson supposes that elephants were first used in the history of military science at the battle of Arbela,² "to which they added an unwonted element of grotesqueness and savagery." They do not seem to have been of much service in the actual struggle. Macaulay has remembered the elephants of Pyrrhus in his "Prophecy of Capys":

"The Greek shall come against thee,
 The conqueror of the East.
 Beside him stalks to battle
 The huge earth-shaking beast,
 The beast on whom the castle
 With all its guards doth stand,
 The beast who hath between his eyes
 The serpent for a hand."

¹ See Rawlinson, "Ancient Monarchies," iii., p. 148. In the fourth century before our era the elephant withdrew to India ("Chabas," p. 576).

² *Ibid.*, p. 387.

These latter lines allude to the Lucretian epithet for the elephant, *anguimanus*.¹

The recent excitement about the elephant Jumbo, which the Zoological Society sold to Barnum, called forth many interesting notices of the elephant in the Middle Ages in the public prints. From these the following facts may be culled. In the year 1229 an elephant was sent by the Soldan of Babylon as a rare present to the Emperor Frederick II. But it was not until 1255 that the first elephant was seen for the lapse of 1200 years in Britain. This was presented by the King of France, as we learn from the chronicles of John of Oxenedes and others. It was housed in the Tower, and lived on till the forty-first year of Henry III., A.D. 1257, when it seems to have died, aged only twelve years. The charges of itself and keeper may be seen in the "Chancellor's Roll." Just as Jumbo has immortalized his keeper, Scott, so this royal elephant-keeper still lives as John Gouch. The sheriff of Kent was commanded together with him "to provide for bringing the King's elephant from Whitford to Dover."²

It seems that white elephants have an actual existence apart from proverbs and essays. Mr.

¹ Compare Lucretius, ii. 538 :

"Elephantos India quorum
Millibus e multis vallo munitur eburno
Ut penitus nequeat penetrari."

They were known also to Lucretius as "boves Lucas" (v. 1301).

² *Notes and Queries*, 6th S., v. 385.

Bock, a recent traveller, was in 1880 very kindly received by the King of Siam, and witnessed the procession of the sacred white elephants. The skin of these so-called white elephants he describes as being rather a pinkish-grey. He made a coloured drawing of the latest addition to the royal stables, with which the King was much pleased.

A much-lauded white elephant arrived in London in Jan., 1884, but greatly disappointed most people. It was light-coloured, and spotted on the root of the trunk and over the ears. One authority looked upon these markings as being the result of albinism, another as being due to a disease known as *leucoderma* (Prof. Flowers and Mr. B. Squires's letters to the *Times* of that date). Considerable sanctity is attached to white elephants in the East. The Hindoos perhaps connect them with Airawata, the elephant of India, from whom the great river Irawadi, or Iravati, derives its name, like the Hydraotes, or Ravee, of the Punjab. After a short time this so-called white elephant left us for the Americans, a people more appreciative of such marvels.

The elephant does not appear in the Homeric poems, but ivory is often mentioned. A celebrated passage ("Iliad," iv. 141) compares the blood on Menelaus, when wounded by an arrow, to a Mæonian or Carian woman staining ivory with crimson to be an ornament for horses' heads, "and it lies in her chamber, and many horsemen desire to wear it, but it stays as an ornament for a

king.”¹ The Trojan reins were ornamented with ivory studs (“*Iliad*,” v. 583). In the “*Odyſſey*” more uſe is made of it. Athene makes Penelope “whiter than new-fawn ivory” (xviii. 196). Her chair was deſtly wrought with ivory and ſilver (xix. 56), and the key of her chamber had an ivory handle (xxi. 7). We hear, too, of a bronze ſword with ſilver handle and ſheath of freſh-fawn ivory (viii. 404); while in the palace of Menelaus at Sparta were bronze, gold, amber and ivory, like the halls of Olympus (iv. 73). Perhaps the moſt celebrated alluſion to this ſubſtance, however, occurs in Penelope’s account of the twin gate of dreams, “the one of which has been faſhioned of horn, and the other of ivory. The dreams which paſs through the fawn ivory are deceptive, bringing words which have no fulfilment, but thoſe which proceed through the poliſhed horn bring true iſſues, whenever a mortal ſees them” (xix. 564).² Virgil often touches on ivory in much the ſame connection as the above. “India mittit ebur,” he tells us (“*Georg.*,” i. 57); and at Cæſar’s death, among the dread portents, “Mæſtum illa-chrymat templis ebur” (“*Georg.*,” i. 480). He ſpeaks, too, of “dona auro gravia ſectoque elephanto” (“*Æneid*,” iii. 464). The Aſſyrians carried on a great traffic in ivory with the Eaſt,

¹ Compare Virgil, “*Æneid*,” xii. 68 :

“Indum ſanguineo veluti violaverit oſtro
Si quis ebur.”

² Homer here indulges in a play on words. The ivory is ἐλέφας; the word for “deceptive” is ἐλεφάρονται. Virgil imitates the whole paſſage at the end of the ſixth “*Æneid*,” (893).

and disseminated it through the Western countries and Europe. The native country of the Eastern elephant is the peninsula of India. Egyptian ivory was largely brought from Ethiopia, though their elephants were originally from Asia.¹

Sir Thos. Browne has a sensible chapter in the main on elephants, in his "Vulgar Errors," condemning several "old and gray-headed errors" on it. His own credulity, however, is amusing to the present generation, especially when he deems it strange that the curiosity of man, which had tried to induce many beasts to speak, had never attempted to tutor an elephant, for "the serpent that spake unto Eve, the dogs and cats that usually speak unto witches, might afford some encouragement."

The elephant occasionally appears upon coins; as on one of Tarentum, probably connected with the invasion of Pyrrhus; also on one of Vespasian. It is found, too, on the coins of Metellus, who brought many Carthaginian elephants to Rome in the First Punic War; also on those of Cæsar, from the legend that that name was the Carthaginian word for an elephant, and was originally applied to the first of the Julian gens who had slain one of these creatures. It meant, as a symbol on a coin, eternity; and sometimes munificence in giving games to the populace. Cæsar is amusingly connected, by the Rev. J. Coleridge, a man of

¹ See "Dict. of Bible," *sub voc.* "ivory." Polydore Vergil has a proverb alluding to the slow gestation of elephants—"citius elephanti parient."

some learning for his day, and father of the poet, with elephants. It seems that, about the middle of last century, much curiosity was shown with regard to the fossil elephant bones and ivory so often found in South Eastern England, and there were many speculations about the manner in which elephants could have reached our shores. In July, 1757, that clergyman (who was Vicar of Ottery St. Mary, Devon) wrote his views to the "Gentleman's Magazine." A previous correspondent had hazarded the notion that the Romans had brought over these huge creatures to intimidate the Britons; but, he adds, "we have not the least account of any such thing." Mr. Coleridge, however, points out that a passage in the "Stratagems" of Polyænus expressly mentions that an elephant was brought over by Cæsar and used in forcing the passage of the Thames when the Romans were opposed by Cassivelaunus. The Romans then caused their elephant to advance, wearing an iron coat of mail, and carrying bowmen and slingers in a little castle on its back, whereupon the Britons at once fled. Cæsar, he adds, probably omitted this account in his "Commentaries," thinking that the mention of it would detract from the honour of his victories. But the closing sentences of the letter are so interesting from the standpoint of the geologist in the nineteenth century, that it is worth while quoting them: "It is reasonable to suppose that as the Romans reaped such advantages from one elephant, they would bring over more of these

animals with them, and, as the Roman conquests were chiefly about Suffex, Essex, and Kent, it is most likely that the bones of these creatures should be found in those counties. It cannot be proved, indeed, that these bones have not lain ever since the general flood; but an historical truth is, in my opinion, preferable to any hypothesis whatsoever." Modern science can well afford a smile at the amusing candour of these conclusions.

In the East, as is only natural, the elephant being regarded as possessed of more than mere brute wisdom, is often deemed sacred. Thus the Hindoo Ganesha (god of wisdom) is represented with an elephant's head, and the creature itself frequently appears in the art of Hindostan. It is very rarely seen in English architecture; but an elephant's head and trunk are sculptured on one of the pillars of the North or Dorset Chapel of the Church of Ottery St. Mary, Devon. On the summit, too, of Gosberton Church, Lincolnshire, appears an elephant with a huge spiral trunk. In the so-called Pictish ornamentation on ancient Scottish sculptured stones, a good many observers have fancied that they could detect the elephant's form, and especially the spiral of its trunk. Doubtless much of this is due to imagination. In some cases there may be a faint remembrance of the mammoth. Elaborate schemes of mythical orientalizing have been founded on this spiral line, which, after all, is simply a characteristic mark of early Scottish ornamentation. The late Dr. Burton says, "It is pretty evident, when we in-

spect him closely, that the animal so often supposed to be figured on ancient Scottish sculptured stones, though a strange beast of some peculiar conventional type, is no elephant. That spiral winding-up of his snout, which passed for a trunk, is a characteristic refuge of embryo art, repeated upon other parts of the animal. It is necessitated by the difficulty which a primitive artist feels in bringing out the form of an extremity, whatever it may be—snout, horn, or hoof. He finds that the easiest termination he can make is a whirl, and he makes it accordingly. Thus the noses, the tails, the feet of the characteristic monster of the sculptured stones all end in a whirl. The same difficulty is met in repeated instances in these stones by another ingenious resource. Animals are united or twined together by noses or tails, to enable the artist to escape the difficulty of executing the extremities of each separately.”¹ These remarks are perhaps more ingenious than convincing when we remember the extreme love for the spiral and for convoluted and parallel ornamentation which extended into the Saxon and Norman decoration of churches. There was doubtless a mystic signification attached to the many curious spiral lines of early North-British sculptures.

Much information has recently appeared respecting the mammoth, which will here be condensed. The Arabs in the ninth and two succeeding centuries showed immense enterprise and energy, their

¹ “The Bookhunter,” p. 399; and see “The Ancient Sculptured Stones of Scotland” (Spalding Society, 2 vols. fol.).

traders frequenting the borderlands of Siberia, and probably first initiating the trade in fossil ivory throughout the West. There is every probability that the very name "mammoth," as well as "mammoth ivory" itself, were first brought to the Western world by the Arabs. "Mammoth" is merely a form of "behemoth." Witzen, who first described the creature in 1694, uses the two names as synonymous; and Father Avril, a Jesuit who travelled in China in 1685, calls the mammoth "Behemot." The Turkish dialects habitually interchange *b* and *m*, and there seems no doubt that Job's "behemoth," which the Arabs pronounce "mehemot," filtered through the Russian and Tartar tongues into our "mammoth," the word "behemoth" being used of any monstrous beast originally, and then confined in the North to the great fossil elephant.¹ The creature itself was first described by Witzen (whose book, written in Dutch, has never been translated) in 1686. The first mammoth tusk was brought to England by Josias Logan in 1611, and had been purchased near the Petschora river. A mammoth mummy was first disinterred about 1692; another was found near the river Alasej in 1787; next comes the one above described in 1699 on the Tamut Peninsula; another was opened out on the Yenisej in 1839, and again others were found in 1846 and 1866.²

¹ See an excellent paper on the name "Mammoth" by H. H. Howorth, F.S.A., in *The Field Naturalist*, July, 1882, p. 30.

² "Voyage of the Vega," by Nordenfkiöld (1881). See vol. i., p. 400 *seq.*



CHAPTER VIII.

THE HORSE.

“Ripa nutritus in illa,
Ad quam Gorgonei delapsa est penna caballi.”
(Juv. *Sat.*, iii. 117.)



REMAINS of the horse in a domesticated state have been found in Swiss lake-dwellings of the Neolithic period, but Professor Huxley deems that the *anchitheres* of the upper Eocene times were the true ancestors of the horse. These fossil creatures were about the size of Shetland ponies, and possessed three distinct hoofs on each foot.¹ Without committing ourselves to a belief in the Darwinian doctrines of descent, we may well be grateful to science for pointing out the different stages in which creative Wisdom was pleased to fashion similar extinct animals, before giving man so useful a creature as the horse. A very early specimen of art represents the fossil horse

¹ Dawkins, “Early Man in Britain,” p. 32, and Sir J. Lubbock, “Address to the British Association,” Sept. 1881; see, too, his “Fifty Years of Science,” p. 9 (Macmillan, 1882).

carved on a rib by the cave-men of Dordogne, apparently with a flint graver.¹ The manner in which one horse is represented as biting the tail of another at the same time that it depresses and puts back its own ears, is remarkably true to nature, and seems the sketch of an artist skilled in the use of the pencil, rather than the scratching of a savage. The *equidæ*, as a family, only date from Pliocene times. The fossil horse of our islands was the size of a small horse at present, and had a larger head than the domesticated races, as may be well seen in the engraving of the carved rib from Dordogne in Mr. Wilson's book. Two or three skeletons of horses have been found in Scotland buried along with their owners, chiefs in the iron period, and the bridle-bits of these horses are frequently very beautiful.² But with regard to horse furniture, two most singular horse-collars of stone were found near the parallel roads of Glenroy in Scotland.³ These are models rather than the actual collars which were used in the stone period, and are finely polished. Of course their discovery led to much wild speculation about the parallel roads having once been the scene of public games and chariot races, after the old-fashioned type of archæology. Careful breeding has given the domesticated horse both size and symmetry. We have seen Roman horse-shoes, found in Devon, which are very small compared with those used

¹ Wilson, "Prehistoric Man," i., p. 106 (1876).

² Wilson, "Prehistoric Annals of Scotland," 1851, p. 458 (several figures).

³ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

for our present horses; and Wilson states¹ that horse-shoes found on the field of Bannockburn and at Nisbetmuir are remarkable for their very diminutive size. As for horse-shoeing, the art was known in the time of Cæsar both to Britons and Saxons, although it is generally asserted to have been introduced into England by William the Norman. The Greeks were accustomed to nail a rim of iron on a horse's hoof, as may be gathered from a Greek coin, now in the British Museum, found at Tarentum, and supposed to date from B.C. 200. The later Roman horse-shoe, made of gold, which horses wore and kicked off in triumphs, processions and the like, were probably not nailed on the foot.

Passing from the animal's derivation to that of its name, as being a common domestic animal of the Indo-European races, it is not surprising to find the word "horse" substantially one and the same in all the Aryan dialects. Thus it is *asva* in Sanscrit, *ἵππος* in Greek, and (connected by the dialectical *ἵκκος*) *equus* in Latin; "hors" (the Anglo-Saxon name), or "ors," by a usual metathesis became "ros" or "rofs" in German. The horse was not used by the Jews until the times of David and Solomon, in consequence of the hilly nature of their country, and because of the direct prohibition (Deut. xvii. 16). It came to Palestine from Egypt, where it had been probably introduced by the Hyksos. Thus it is not found represented on the monuments before the

¹ Wilson, "Annals," p. 437.

eighteenth dynasty, and the agreement between its name in Egyptian and in Hebrew points to a Semitic origin.¹ With the Greeks it was sacred to Poseidon, and the well-known legend of his creation of the animal may either point to its introduction into Hellas by sea, or be an instance of Greek poetic fancy (just as we talk of "white horses" when the waves ruffle the sea in summer), and be connected with the horses of the sun, so frequent a myth in Oriental mythologies, which seem every morning to rise from the sea.² So the Rhodians used yearly to cast into the sea a four-horse chariot which had been dedicated to the sun, and every ninth year in Illyricum four chariot horses were similarly cast into the sea. Sophocles speaks of day dawning with its white horses ("Ajax," 672).

Among the Persians Mithra was the sun-god, and was personified, as also among the Greeks and Romans, as driving a team of horses in his chariot. There are numberless allusions in ancient literature to the horse as being an animal sacred to the sun. "Persia," says Ovid, "appeases the sun with a horse that a slow victim may not be given to a swift god."³ Xenophon speaks of the same sacrifice. The Scythian Massagetæ followed the same custom, "sacrificing the swiftest of all mortal creatures to the swiftest of the gods."⁴ In

¹ Wilkinson, "Ancient Egyptians" (Abridgment, vol. i., p. 386).

² To Neptune was attributed the invention of reins. Soph. "Œd. Col.," 713-15, Dind.

³ "Fast.," i. 385.

⁴ Lib. i. 216.

the Vedas the chariot of the sun is drawn by two, seven, or ten horses called "haritas," which is always a feminine noun. Professor Müller has traced the connection between these and the Greek "charites" or "Graces," and the Greek god of love, Eros, with the Sanscrit conception of Dawn.¹ The team of the sun's chariot with the Greeks and Romans was four in number. No ancient sculptor ever carved these prancing fire-breathing steeds more nobly than has our own Gibson in the wonderful *bas-relief* to be seen at Wentworth House, the divine youth restraining his plunging steeds without an effort, as it were, as the "wild team" arise

"And shake the darkness from their loosened manes,
And beat the twilight into flakes of fire."²

The Greek Hours who lead forth the chariot become in Sanscrit oxen, from the notion of oxen going forth at morning to pasture, and returning with evening; and so, remarks Professor Max Müller, we can understand the inner meaning of the old Homeric myth respecting the companions of Odysseus who killed the oxen of the sun and never again saw their native land. They wasted their hours elsewhere, literally killed the time in idleness and voluptuous living. So, too, we can understand the force of the Homeric epithets applied to the sun's horses, "swift-flying," "swift-

¹ Max Müller, "Selected Essays," i., p. 439.

² Compare the horses of the Sun in Virgil, "Æneid," xii.

"From the deep gulf the Sun's proud couriers rise
And, rearing, from their nostrils breathe forth flame."

footed," and the like, which Virgil follows in his "wing-footed" horses.

It was probably due to some connection with the swift-flowing streams of rivers that the ancients were often wont to sacrifice horses on their banks. Thus Xerxes, on crossing the Strymon, when about to invade Greece with his enormous host, sacrificed white horses to propitiate it.¹ And in much later times, while Vitellius offered the customary Roman sacrifices by the Euphrates, its stream was appeased by Tiridates with the sacrifice of a horse.² Ten sacred horses of the celebrated Nyfæan breed were led, gorgeously caparisoned, before the chariot of Mithra on the march of Xerxes, while after it the royal chariot in which the King himself sat in state was also drawn by Nyfæan horses. The Nyfæan plain, whence came the most prized horses of the Persians, was situated to the south-west of Ecbatana, on the high uplands west of Mount Zagros. The Persians have always been fond of horses; indeed, their education, according to Herodotus, consisted in three things—learning to ride, to shoot, and to speak the truth.³ The pre-eminence of the Nyfæan horses has now passed to the Arabian horses of the Nedjd.

Aristotle ends a chapter about the age and dentition of the horse, which might pass muster in a modern manual of farriery, with an account of a

¹ Herod., vii. 113.

² Tac. "Ann.," vi. 37.

³ Herod., vii. 40 and i. 136; and Rawlinson, "Five Great Monarchies," p. 145 and ii. p. 261.

celebrated superstition among the ancients, the *hippomanes*. "When a foal is born," he says, "the mother immediately bites off a growth upon its forehead, which is a little less than a fig in size, and is broad, circular, and black. If anyone is beforehand in obtaining this, and the mare should smell it, she is beside herself and maddened with its odour. Hence forcereffes seek for and collect it as a charm."¹ And he adds, "The horse seems to be eminently an animal fond of its young; thus, when mares have lived together, if one dies the rest cherish its foal, and often the barren ones themselves cherish these foals, but by reason of having no milk kill them." Pliny evidently had Aristotle's book before him, but adds a multitude of fables, as his wont is, to the Stagyrice's common-sense. Thus Cæsar's horse would suffer no one but its master to mount it, and was notable for its forelegs ending in human feet. It was honoured with a gorgeous tomb, while at Agrigentum pyramids were erected as memorials of many horses. The great Semiramis was in love with a horse. The Scythian cavalry was famous; and on one occasion, when a chieftain was killed, his horse fell with tooth and hoof upon the victor and slew him. Such is the docility of the horse, that all the cavalry of Sybaris was taught to dance to the sound of a measure. It snuffs the battle afar off, and mourns its lost lord, sometimes even with tears. Nay, when King Nicomedes died his horse starved itself to death. When Dionysius left his

¹ Arist., "Hist. Animalium," vi. 22, 6 and ix. 5.

horse foundered in a bog in order himself to escape, the animal followed its master's footsteps with a swarm of bees hanging on its mane; and in consequence of this portent Dionysius seized upon the throne. The fiercer the horse, the deeper does he plunge his nose into water when he drinks. These and other still more wonderful myths, which are scarcely to be told in the vulgar tongue, passed current with the Roman encyclopædist for natural history.¹ He follows Aristotle, too, in the marvellous story of the *hippomanes*.

Like most of our domestic animals, the horse probably came into Europe from the vast steppes of Turkestan and the Oxus. Thence they formed the Spanish stock, which was so celebrated amongst the Romans, and which Pliny commends for its well-ordered paces and high action. The fame of Spanish horses, however, yet survives; and at the official entry of the Princess Stephanie into Vienna on May 9, 1881, the day before her marriage, her carriage was drawn by milk-white steeds of the purest Spanish blood. Both the black and white varieties of the strain are scrupulously kept pure in the Imperial stud; and, with the exception perhaps of the cream-coloured Hanoverians, are the only pure representatives of the breed in existence. The swiftest African horses also came of Spanish blood. In Poland, buffaloes and wild horses abounded in early times. Full accounts of the Scythians on the steppes of Southern Russia, and their nomadic mode of life with horses and flocks, are given in Hero-

¹ Pliny, "Hist. Nat.," viii. 42.

dotus. The Parthians, much farther to the East, were, if possible, still more distinctively equestrian in their habits. "They are at all times carried on horses. On them they fight, take their meals, perform all public and private duties, make their journeys, rest, barter, converse. The chief difference between slaves and freemen with them is, that slaves walk on foot, while freemen always ride."¹ A Roman poet, too, speaks of "learning how many miles the Parthian horseman can ride without water." Many mares of this stock were sent into Macedonia by Philip, the father of Alexander the Great, to improve the native race. The cavalry of Thrace² and Thessaly was famous with the ancients, and the mares, as in Arabia at present, were more highly valued than the horses.

What the ancient ideal of a good horse was may be gathered from Virgil:³

"Upright he walks, on pasterns firm and straight,
His motions easy, prancing in his gait.
The first to lead the way, to tempt the flood,
To pass the bridge unknown, nor fear the trembling wood.
Dauntless at empty noises, lofty-necked,
Sharp-headed, barrel-bellied, broadly-backed,
Brawny his chest and deep, his colour gray,
For beauty dappled, or the brightest bay,
Faint white and dun will scarce the rearing pay."

Yet the possession of these points are of little avail without a long ancestry; "let him trace

¹ See Justin, xli. 3; and Propertius, iv. 3, 35, quoted in Victor Hehn's "Kulturpflanzen und Hausthiere" (Berlin, 1877), p. 24.

² So Turnus,

"Maculis quem Thracius albis
Portat equus."—("Æn.," ix. 49.)

³ "Georg.," iii. 79, 121.

his breed to Epirus and warlike Mycenæ, and even deduce his pedigree from Neptune himself," then the result is unmistakable :

"The fiery courser, when he hears from far
The sprightly trumpets and the shouts of war,
Pricks up his ears and trembling with delight,
Shifts place, and paws, and hopes the promised fight.
On his right shoulder his thick mane reclined,
Ruffles at speed and dances in the wind.
His horny hoofs are jetty black and round,
His chine is double ; starting with a bound
He turns the turf and shakes the solid ground.
Fire from his eyes, clouds from his nostrils flow,
He bears his rider headlong on the foe."¹

The line in which the Latin poet imitates the galloping of horses, is well known to all lovers of the "Æneid." Another striking picture of the horse when perishing by an epidemic, merits quotation :

"The victor horse, forgetful of his food,
The palm renounces and abhors the flood.
He paws the ground and on his hanging ears
A doubtful sweat in clammy drops appears ;
Parched is his hide and rugged are his hairs.
Such are the symptoms of the young disease,
But in time's process, when his pains increase,
He rolls his mournful eyes, he deeply groans
With patient sobbing and with manly moans.
He heaves for breath, which from his lungs supplied
And fetched from far distends his labouring side."

A drench of wine administered through a horn has sometimes proved successful in arresting the disease, but as often as not merely supplied fuel for the flames :

"For the too vigorous dose too fiercely wrought
And added fury to the strength it brought ;

¹ Dryden.

Recruited into rage he grinds his teeth
In his own flesh and feels approaching death.
Ye gods, to better fate good men dispose,
And turn that impious error on our foes!"

Turning once more to the East, we find the Assyrian horses highly prized at present as they were of old. They are small of stature, but of exquisite symmetry and wonderful endurance. Mr. Layard mentions a case where a Sheikh refused no less a sum than £1,200 for a favourite mare.¹ The Median horses now belong to two distinct breeds, the Turkoman, a large powerful animal with long legs and a big head, and the true Arabian, much smaller and more perfectly shaped. Of the Nysæan horses we have already spoken. Babylonia bred vast numbers of horses under the Persian rule. Thus one satrap possessed 800 stallions and 10,000 mares. The breed is thought to have been strong and large-limbed rather than handsome, the head being too large and the legs too short for symmetry. The Huns, like the Parthians and Scythians, passed all their lives on horseback. Cilicia also possessed a breed of white horses. It brought 360 of these—one a day for all the days of the Persian year—year by year to Darius.² The horses belonging to the lake-dwellers of the Pæonians were fed with fish from the lakes below the pile-dwellings, according to Herodotus.³ The Sigynnæ, a Thracian tribe in the extreme North, he also tells us, possessed horses so small that they

¹ Rawlinson's "Five Empires," i. 232 ; ii. 302 ; iii. 404 ; and Herod., i. 192.

² Herod., iii. 90.

³ *Ibid.*, v. 16.

must have resembled our Shetland ponies, with hair as thick as five fingers. These Lilliputian animals were not ridden, but yoked to carts. It is curious to find the father of history measuring the depth of horses' hair by fingers, when our standard measure for their height consists of hands.

The Goths and Cimbri were anciently, like the Scythians, nomads, and lived also like them off their herds and flocks; for drink they had pure water and mead, with mares' milk.¹ This milk, however, they did not drink unless it had first been consecrated, the horse being an animal sacred to the god of war. Sometimes they drank till drunkenness overcame them of the milk and blood of their beasts of burden. They had horses of two colours, black and white, and esteeming one or the other sacred, did not ride on both alike.² The beasts of the ancient Germans, according to Cæsar, were small and ill-shaped, and Tacitus says their horses were neither conspicuous for beauty nor speed, nor were they trained to circle round at the will of their riders, as were the Roman cavalry horses.³ The Britons attacked in a defaultory way with chariots, now charging their

¹ Cnf. Virgil, "Georg.," iii. 463 :

"Et lac concretum cum fanguine potat equino."

Camilla, the heroine of the later books of the "Æneid," was fed as an infant on mare's milk. One of the few babies preserved by the French through the horrors of the retreat from Moscow was kept alive by feeding it on a paste made of horse's blood.

² See V. Hehn, *ut sup.*

³ Tac., "Germ.," vi.

enemies, now wheeling round their horses, and again seizing an opportunity when it offered. This was peculiarly annoying to the heavy-armed Roman soldiers, and when the Roman cavalry followed, the chariotmen leapt out and confronted them on foot.¹

Here the manner in which the horse was employed in war naturally deserves a word or two. This seems to have been its use everywhere before it was utilized for agricultural work, just as the pastoral state of life naturally preceded a more settled mode of existence. So in the Hebrew Scriptures the horse is exclusively considered as an animal useful in war. Oxen invariably precede it as beasts of draught, just as we are now seeing it in its turn superseded by steam. But with regard to the employment of the horse in war, Lucretius in a celebrated passage (v. 1296) seems to have misapprehended its true sequence. "The custom of a warrior mounting on horseback," he says, "and guiding his steed with reins and the right hand, is antecedent in time to tempting the dangers of war in a two-horse chariot; and this, again, to the use of four-horse chariots and chariots armed with scythes." As a matter of fact, chariots seem to have been used before the art of riding on horseback had been learnt. The Lapithæ were the first to invent breaking-in of horses and the use of the bridle, while Ericthonius first introduced the yoking of four horses to a chariot. The heroes before Troy always fought from chariots, and never

¹ Cæsar, "Bell. Gall.," v. 16.

on horseback. Grecian and Trojan civilization as well were just escaping, in the ten years' war before Troy, from those sacrifices of horses which, as we have seen, were wide-spread in the ancient world. It now did not so much worship as reverence the animal. "The horse in Homer generally has not only a poetical grandeur," says Mr. Gladstone, "but a near relation to deity, which I am unable sufficiently to explain; but which, it seems possible, may be the reflection or analogue of the place assigned to the ox in the East. Several circumstances, and among them the practice of describing a champaign country as one suited to feeding the horse, combine to show how completely for the Greek this noble creature stood at the head of the animal creation."¹ While agreeing in the main with this lover of Homer, we believe that the semi-divine honour paid to the horse was no reflection of ox-worship from the East, but an independent phase of religious thought. How closely Homer deemed the horse connected with the gods, may be seen in the curious narrative of Hera giving Xanthus, one of the immortal chariot-horses of Achilles, powers of speech, which the animal forthwith used to foretell its master's speedy death.²

The ancients chiefly knew of herds of wild horses about the river Hypanis³ and in the vast tract which they termed Scythia, which answers to the South of Russia, Turkestan, and the deserts

¹ Gladstone, "Juventus Mundi," p. 360.

² "Iliad," xix. 400 *seq.*

³ Herod., iv. 52.

stretching into Mid Asia. Palæontology shews that horses once abounded in the New World, but those which are now found there in a wild state are all of them the descendants of the horses imported by the Spanish conquerors, the original horses of the country having everywhere died out before the introduction of man into the Continent. The aborigines, whom the Spanish found dwelling in Mexico and Peru, had no tradition or hieroglyphic indicative of such a quadruped, and the horses brought across the Atlantic by the invaders were viewed with astonishment and alarm.¹

At the siege of Troy, Priam's horses had been reared at Abydos, which was famous for them. Homer calls Ilios "blessed with good horses," and speaks of the "horse-subduing Trojans" as if they were an equestrian people. Myths connected Troy with horses from the beginning, indicative, perhaps, of a Phœnician founder (just as the emblem of Carthage was a horse²), and these legends have been very useful to the poets. Thus Zeus gave Tros, the eponymus of Troy, divine horses in payment for his son Ganymede, carried off to be a celestial cupbearer; and Hercules rescued the daughter of Laomedon, Hesione, from a sea-monster sent by Poseidon, on the faith

¹ Owen, "History of British Fossil Mammals," p. 398: "The horse in its ancient distribution over both hemispheres of the globe resembled the mastodon, and appears to have become extinct in North America at the same time with the *m. giganteus*, and in South America with the *megatherium*."

² "Signum quod regia Juno
Monstrârat, caput acris equi."—("Æn.," i. 443.)

of a promise that the King would give him some steeds of this divine stock. Laomedon, however, broke his word, and the hero besieged and took Troy. During the second and more celebrated ten years' siege of the city, Æneas possessed horses of this celestial strain, "the best of all horses seen by the dawn and the sun" ("Iliad," v. 265). Circe craftily stole this stock, and so their descendants are said to "breathe fire from their nostrils" ("Æneid," vii. 281). Very fitly, too, was the destruction of Troy accomplished by the aid of the wooden horse, "*instar montis equum*" ("Æneid," ii. 15). Laocoon's advice, so ill-starred for himself, deserves quotation in the original, as fifty are familiar with the proverb, for one who knows whence it comes:

"Equo ne credite, Teucri,
Quicquid id est timco Danaos et dona ferentes."¹

The poetic instinct of Homer compares Paris, one of the leading champions of Troy, going forth to battle, to an exulting horse:

"As when some stall-fed horse his barley leaves
And breaks his bonds and clatters o'er the plain,
Wont there to bathe within the fair-glowing stream,
Exulting; high he bears his head, his mane
Tosses athwart his neck, and winged with pride,
Welcomes with lofty steps the well-known meads."²

When Zeus goes forth from Olympus his horses are "swift-flying" in the "Iliad" (viii. 41-43), "their flowing manes tied up with gold." Milton, on the other hand, when "the chariot of

¹ "Æneid," ii. 49.

² "Iliad," vi. 506-511.

Paternal Deity" proceeds to war, is silent (seeing how little space in Hebrew history the horse filled) about steeds to draw it, but incorporates the grandest imagery of the prophets into one of his noblest descriptions.¹ The two horses of Achilles's chariot, Xanthus and Balius, flew, says Homer, like the wind, and (in accordance with a superstition common throughout the ancient world) were begotten of the west wind, he adds, on Podarga, as she was feeding in a meadow by the ocean stream.² Similarly Mars has two horses in his chariot in the "Iliad," named Fear and Terror, though at other times these are called his sons. Homer represents Erichthonius as possessing 3,000 horses, and 12 foals of marvellous properties, able to run over the ears of corn or the waves without injuring or sinking in them, were born of these by Boreas ("Iliad," xx. 219). Four horses were slain at the pyre of Patroclus, and the rest of the warriors' chargers were led round the dead body in a rite called by the Romans "decurfio" ("Iliad," xxiii. 10). Horses were cast alive into the Scamander to propitiate the river ("Iliad," xx. 130). Bochart in his "Hierozoicon" treats of ancient horses at large.

Among the Anglo-Saxons no heathen priest was allowed to ride on a male horse (Bede's "Eccl. Hist.," ii. 13). None of the most ancient gods of Greece were imagined as riding on horseback. Zeus, Apollo, and the rest have two-horse chariots. It is Dionysos, belonging to a different order of

¹ "Paradise Lost," book vi.

² "Iliad," xvi. 149.

deities, who first rides a panther, as Silenus, an afs. Heroes, fuch as Perfeus, Thefeus, and the Dioscuri, are mounted on horfes. Okeanus bestrides a winged fteed ("Prom. Vincit.," 395). The northern gods generally ride; Odin on Sleipnir. He faddles it for himfelf. Night had a fteed Hrîmfaxi (rimy-mane), as Day had Skînfaxi (fhining-mane).¹ In the earlieft period of Teutonic mythology the horfe feems to have been the favourite animal for facrifice. There is no doubt that before the introduction of Chriftianity its flefh was constantly eaten. Nothing in the ways of the heathen was fo offensive to the new converts as the not giving up the killing of horfes and eating of their flefh.² Cæcina, on approaching the fcene of the overthrow of Varus, faw horfes' heads faftened to the ftems of trees. Thefe were the Roman horfes which had been offered up to the German gods.³

The Roman "horfey" man ufed to fwear by Hippona, a goddefs of horfes. His Greek equivalent appears at the beginning of the "Clouds" of Aristophanes. The horfe, like the camel, is not found on the moft ancient Egyptian monuments: "Tout ce qu'il eft prudent d'en conclure, c'eft que ces animaux n'étaient ni l'un ni l'autre abondants en Egypte du temps de l'ancien empire, et qu'ils n'étaient point encore comptés alors en nombre des animaux domeftiques" (Chabas, p. 423).

Such are fome of the great affociations connected with horfes in heroic days. Argos, Epidaurus,

¹ Grimm's "Northern Mythol.," ed. Stallybrafs, i. 328.

² *Ibid.*, p. 47.

³ Tac., "Ann.," i. 61.

and Epirus were noted among the Greeks for good horses. Hence the allusions, "aptum Argos equis" (Horace's "Odes," i. 7, 9); "domitrix Epidaurus equarum" ("Georg.," iii. 44); "Eliadum palmas Epirus equarum" ("Georg.," i. 59). Wonderful stories are told by the ancients of Bucephalus, the horse of Alexander the Great—how he would allow no one else to mount him when harnessed for war, and when he received his death-stroke in a skirmish in the Indian War, he bore his master safely out of the battle, and then, and not till then, expired, and the like.¹ A few more notices of famous mythical horses may be subjoined, such as the brazen-footed, fire-snorting horses of Æetes, which it was needful that he who would bear off the Golden Fleece should yoke to a plough, and compel to work. Pegasus need only be named. Castor and Pollux had a celebrated horse called Cyllarus. On a coin of Rhegium they are both represented mounted on him, much like the Knights Templars of later times. The chariot-horses of Glaucus were a cause of shuddering to the ancients, as they had gone mad, and torn their master limb from limb.² Cn. Seius possessed a horse of remarkable beauty, said to have sprung from the steeds of Diomedes, whom Hercules had slain and brought his horses from Thrace to Argos, far surpassing all other horses in good qualities. Unluckily fate had decreed that everyone who should own it, together with all his house, family, and fortune, would be irretrievably ruined. Seius himself was

¹ Aul. Gell., v. 2 ; Pliny, viii. 42.

² "Georg.," iii. 267.

capitally punished by Antony the triumvir. Dola-bella then fell in love with the horse, and bought it for a large sum, but was slain in civil war in Syria. Cassius was its next owner, and he, on the rout of his party, put an end to himself. Antony then became possessed of it, and his miserable end it is needless to mention. Hence, says Aulus Gellius, arose a proverb of men noted for their misfortunes—"He owns a Seian horse."¹ Moralists might apply this story to the ruin which so often overtakes men in modern times who devote themselves to racing, more especially as the horse of Seius is described as having been of a dark colour; and in the person of Pheidippides, the horse-lover portrayed in the beginning of the "Clouds" of Aristophanes, might descry the type of many a "horsey" man of our own times. If horses were sacred to Neptune, none might ever be brought near a temple or grove sacred to Diana, because horses had caused the death of her favourite, Hippolytus.²

In our own land the horse is found on a coin of Verulamium, the capital of Cassivelaunus. Indeed, it has been noticed that the horse was a favourite animal with the Kelts, and that both on the famous White Horse of the Berkshire Downs and on coins the animal is represented with the wrong leg foremost in an impossible attitude. It was the ensign also of the Saxons; but with them the leg is always correctly drawn (see *Blackwood's Magazine*, September, 1883, p. 321). A curious

¹ Aul. Gell., iii. 9.

² "Æn.," vii. 778.

instance of the use to which its teeth might be put may be seen in the Gibbs's bequest at the South Kensington Museum, where a set of sixty-three draught-men occurs, which date from Anglo-Saxon times. Turning to the fatherland of these Teutonic invaders, it is impossible to forget Odin's celebrated eight-footed horse, Sleipnir. The horse was much offered in sacrifice, and also eaten among the northern nations, before the introduction of Christianity, and there are many indications that the early converts could not wholly give up the eating of horse-flesh. The ancient Germans, after the sacrifice of horses, commonly cut off their heads, and fixed them in some sacred grove as acceptable offerings to their gods.

At the New Year's festival horses were specially sacrificed. We have seen in the more retired districts of Glamorganshire the head of a horse carried round the country at Christmas-time with singing and merriment, which is without doubt a relic of these heathenish superstitions. Pope Gregory III. wrote to St. Boniface so late as A.D. 751, "Among other things, you add that some are wont to eat wild horses, and very many domestic horses: this you should never suffer to be done. Some fowls also, such as jackdaws, rooks, and storks, are to be wholly interdicted from the meals of Christians; beavers also, and hares, and much more wild horses, are to be avoided."¹ Horse-flesh and that of cats

¹ "Inter cetera agrestem caballum aliquantos comedere adjunxisti, plerosque et domesticum; hoc nequaquam fieri deinceps finas. Imprimis de volatilibus, id est graculis et

are more than once named as the food of heathens and witches in northern literature. A curious verse, which is part of the grace before meat of the monks of St. Gall, points to the use of horse-flesh so late as A.D. 1000—

“Sit feralis equi caro dulcis in hac cruce Christi,”

while Professor R. Smith has furnished that “our own prejudice against horse-flesh is a relic of an old ecclesiastical prohibition framed at the time when the eating of such food was an act of worship to Odin.”¹ Hippophagy has assumed considerable proportions in Paris of late years, and the following advertisement from the *Times* of Sept. 16, 1881, shews that the northern nations are still true to their old attachment: “Horse-Flesh for Exportation.—Wanted, found prime Salted Meat in large pieces, suitable for smoking. Deliveries monthly of about 25 barrels of 200 lb. to 300 lb. each. State price, including packages. f. o. b. London, Liverpool, or Hull. J. C. S——, Landemarket, Copenhagen.”

Having thus brought ancient and modern times into juxtaposition, it is well to remember the poet’s line—

“Et jam tempus equum fumantia solvere colla.”²

corniculis atque ciconiis quæ omnino cavendæ sunt ab esu Christianorum; etiam et fibri, et lepores, et equi silvatici multo amplius vitandi.” See Victor Hehn, *ut sup.*, p. 24, and Grimm’s “Teutonic Mythology,” ed. Stallybrass, vol. i., p. 47, 1880.


¹ “Lectures on the Old Testament,” p. 366.

² “Georg,” ii. 542.



CHAPTER IX.

GARDENS.

“OD ALMIGHTY first planted a garden, and, indeed, it is the purest of human pleasures; it is the greatest refreshment to the spirits of man, without which buildings and palaces are but gross handyworks; and a man shall ever see, that when ages grow to civility and elegancy, men come to build stately, sooner than to garden finely, as if gardening were the greater perfection.” Thus Lord Bacon begins the sweetest of his essays, from every line of which breathe wafts of herbs and flowers. It would be unpardonable, in treating of antiquity, to forget its gardens. Of the original “happy garden,” the cradle of mankind, Milton has gloriously amplified the few outlines traced in the Book of Genesis. Flowers and trees touched his mind almost as much as music, and he never wearies of dwelling on their beauties. Paradise itself is twice described in the great English epic: once in Book iv. 237-268; and again in Book ix. 424-443.

“ Eve separate he spies,
 Veiled in a cloud of fragrance, where she stood,
 Half spied, so thick the roses blushing round
 About her glow'd, oft stooping to support
 Each flower of tender stalk, whose head, though gay
 Carnation, purple, azure, or speck'd with gold,
 Hung drooping, unsustain'd ; them she upstays
 Gently with myrtle band, mindless the while
 Herself, though fairest unsupported flower,
 From her best prop so far, and storm so nigh !
 Nearer he drew, and many a walk traversed
 Of stateliest covert, cedar, pine, or palm ;
 Then voluble and bold, now hid, now seen,
 Among thick-woven arborets, and flow'rs
 Imbordered on each bank, the hand of Eve !
 Spot more delicious than those gardens feigned,
 Or of revived Adonis, or renowned
 Alcinous, host of old Laertes' son ;
 Or that, not mystic, where the sapient king
 Held dalliance with his fair Egyptian spouse.”

Professor Heer has rescued some of the plants and trees which flourished in prehistoric gardens from the buried flora of Switzerland. Such were the following cereals—small lake-dwelling wheat, Egyptian wheat, two-rowed wheat, one-rowed wheat, compact six-rowed barley, small six-rowed barley, common millet and Italian (*fetaria*) ; peas, poppies, flax, caraway seeds, apples, pears, and bullaces.¹ The gardens themselves were probably mere patches of land adjoining caves or lake-dwellings, useful for producing corn and a few fruits.

“ Retired Leisure,
 “ That in trim gardens takes his pleasure,”²
 certainly did not haunt neolithic gardens.

¹ See Dawkins, “ Early Man in Britain ” (Macmillan, 1880), pp. 301-2.

² “ Penferoso,” 49.

The Assyrians were very fond of formal gardens set with trees planted in rows at equal distances from each other, and with walks geometrically regular, especially around temples. Canals or aqueducts frequently supplied these gardens with water. What Rawlinson calls "the monstrous invention of Hanging Gardens,"¹ were known in Assyria as early as the time of Sennacherib. It was not till a much later date, however, that they were introduced into Babylonia, where the celebrated Hanging Gardens of Babylon were esteemed one of the wonders of the ancient world. To us these gardens seem rather a laudable attempt to make the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose. They were constructed by Nebuchadnezzar to gratify the home-sick longings of his favourite wife, Amyitis, and were in the form of "a square, each side of which measured 400 Greek feet. It was supported upon several tiers of open arches, built one over the other like the walls of a classic theatre, and sustaining at each stage or story a solid platform, from which the piers of the next tier of arches rose. The building towered into the air to the height of at least seventy-five feet, and was covered at the top with a great mass of earth, in which there grew not merely flowers and shrubs, but trees also of the largest size. Water was supplied from the Euphrates through pipes, and was raised, it is said, by a screw, working on the principle of Archimedes." It was built of bricks, strongly cemented with bitumen, and protected by

¹ Rawlinson, "Ancient Monarchies," i. 585, and ii. 517.

a layer of sheet lead from the moisture above. "The ascent to the garden was by steps. On the way up among the arches which sustained the building were stately apartments, which must have been pleasant from their coolness. There was also a chamber within the structure containing the machinery by which the water was raised." Professor Rawlinson has put together in these few sentences a mass of information from different classical authorities.

Turning to some of the celebrated gardens of the ancients, partly mythical, partly proverbial, we come first to the Gardens of Adonis, which partook of both these characters. The myth belongs originally to Phœnicia; and the story of Adonis, the favourite of Venus, killed while hunting, and allowed to spend six months alternately with Proserpine and Venus, points not obscurely to the return of summer after winter. Hence "the Gardens of Adonis" is only a poetical expression for summer flowers, and soon passed into a proverb intimating short-lived pleasures. At Athens, the term was used of small pots in which cress and fuch-like quick-growing herbs were raised. So Plato makes Socrates ask whether any husbandman of sense would wish to see his seeds spring up and flourish with a brief eight-day life in Gardens of Adonis, or would leave them to children and the decoration of feasts, and would sow at the fitting time and be contented if, at the end of eight months, he received his harvest.¹ The Gardens of

¹ "Phædrus," 276 B.

the Hesperides were almost equally celebrated. Turner has painted them, and Milton spread the appropriate mist of poetry over these *Μακάρων νῆσοι*,

“Happy isles,
Like those Hesperian gardens famed of old,
Fortunate fields, and groves, and flowery vales,
Thrice happy isles!”¹

and amplified them in the beautiful imagery of “Comus,” 980-1011.

The Gardens of Alcinous are another proverbial Paradise. Alcinous was the just and rich King of the Phæacians in Corcyra, devoted to gardening. “Quid bifera Alcinoi laudem pomaria?” says Statius;² while “to give apples to Alcinous” was much like sending coals to Newcastle with us. Virgil uses these gardens as a synonym for orchards on account of the fruit which Alcinous grew, “pomaque et Alcinoi silvæ” (“Georg.,” ii. 87). All the Latin poets drew their allusions to these gardens from Homer. We extract his account of them from the excellent translation of the “Odyssey” by Butcher and Lang (“Odyssey,” vii. 112-131). Thus the reader obtains a literal rendering free from such verbiage as Pope flings over the passage: “The reddening apple ripens here to gold;” or “Here the blue fig with luscious juice o’erflows;” and the like. “Without the courtyard, hard by the door, is a great garden of four plough-gates, and a hedge runs round on either side. And there grow tall trees blossoming, pear-trees and pomegranates, and apple-trees with

¹ “Par. Lost,” iii. 567.

² “Silv.,” i. 3, 81.

bright fruit, and sweet figs, and olives in their bloom. The fruit of these trees never perisheth, winter or summer, enduring all the year through. Evermore the west wind blowing brings some fruits to birth and ripens others. Pear upon pear waxes old, and apple on apple—yea, and cluster ripens upon cluster of the grape, and fig upon fig. There, too, hath he a fruitful vineyard planted, whereof the one part is being dried by the heat, a sunny spot on level ground, while other grapes men are gathering, and yet others they are treading in the wine-presses. In the foremost row are unripe grapes that cast the blossom, and others there be that are growing black to vintageing. There, too, skirting the furthest line, are all manner of garden-beds, planted trimly, that are fresh continually; and therein are two fountains of water, whereof one scatters his streams all about the garden, and the other runs over against it, beneath the threshold of the courtyard, and issues by the lofty house, and thence did the townsfolk draw water.”

Penelope had a “garden of trees” (“*Odyssæy*,” iv. 737). Onions, as a relish for wine, and poppies were also grown in the Homeric gardens (“*Iliad*,” xi. 629 and viii. 306). But early Greek gardens, as a rule, held little but vines and trees, and were formal in arrangement (“*Iliad*,” v. 90). The *τέμενος*, or sacred enclosure, often round a temple, furnished a model. It was planted with shrubs, vines, and herbs, and was sometimes termed *ὄρχαρος*, whence comes our “orchard” (“*Iliad*,”

vi. 195 ; “ Odyſſey,” xx. 278), if that word be not rather derived from the A.S. *ortegeard*, or garden of herbs.¹ Laertes, in the “ Odyſſey,” is repreſented as a gardener, and Ulyſſes on his return finds him “ alone in the terraced vineyard, digging about a plant.” The ſon addreſſes him, “ Old man, thou haſt no lack of ſkill in tending a garden ; lo, thou careſt well for all, nor is there aught whatſoever, either plant, or fig-tree, or vine, or olive, or pear, or garden-bed in all the cloſe that is not well ſeen to.” Theſe words give ſome idea of a Homeric garden. The pathetic lines of Ulyſſes when diſcovering himſelf to his aſtoniſhed father will fill up ſome of the outlines : “ Come, and I will tell thee the trees through all the terraced garden, which thou gaveſt me once for mine own ; and I was aſking thee this and that, being but a little child, and following thee through the garden. Through theſe very trees we were going, and thou didſt tell me the names of each of them. Pear-trees thirteen thou gaveſt me, and ten apple-trees, and figs two ſcore, and as we went thou didſt name the fifty rows of vines thou wouldeſt give me, whereof each one ripened at divers times, with all manner of cluſters on their boughs, when the ſeaſons of Zeus wrought mightily on them from on high.”²

Roman gardens, again, were for the moſt part formal pleaſure-grounds planted with fruits and

¹ For Greek gardens, ſee Becker’s “ Charicles,” p. 203, note (ed. 1880).

² “ Odyſſey,” xxiv. 244 and 335 (Butcher and Lang’s tranſlation).

flowers, especially such flowers as were useful for garlands. Both Romans and Greeks too, it should be remembered, possessed but a limited flora. Our own garden-treasures have been lovingly brought together, carefully cultivated and improved from every clime. What our natural poverty herein would be, may be imagined by mentally excluding all save native species from our parterres. Lines of trees in a Roman garden bordered straight walks laid out for exercise; while shrubs were cut and trimmed to improve upon nature. Roses and violets, narcissus, poppy, and a few others furnished the borders with flowers. The secondary pleasures of beauty and natural adaptiveness of form and growth, which we dwell upon so largely in our estimation of a garden, were nearly unknown to the ancients. So Ruskin suggestively writes: "I do not know that of the expressions of affection towards external Nature to be found among heathen writers, there are any of which the leading thought leans not towards the sensual parts of her. Her beneficence they sought, and her power they shunned; her teaching through both they understood never. The pleasant influences of soft winds and ringing streamlets, and shady coverts of the violet-couch and plane-tree shade, they received, perhaps, in a more noble way than we; but they found not anything except fear upon the bare mountain. The Hybla heather they loved more for its sweet hives than its purple hues."¹ Virgil often dwells upon gardens: "Plant now thy pears,

¹ "Modern Painters," vol. ii., p. 17.

Melibæus, plant thy vines in order." "Come hither; lo, the Nymphs bear thee lilies in brimming baskets; for thee a fair Naiad, plucking violets and poppy-heads, twines together the narcissus and sweet-smelling dill, and twisting them up with mezereon and other fragrant herbs, varies the delicate hyacinths with yellow marsh-marigold. I myself will gather hoary quinces with tender down, and chestnuts such as my Amaryllis loved; I will add waxen plums, honour shall also be paid to this apple; you, too, laurels, will I pluck, and you, neighbouring myrtle, since thus arranged ye mingle pleasant odours."¹ Again, he says in the "Georgics," "Let gardens breathing with crocus-flowers invite bees, and the protection of Priapus, that guard of thieves and birds, with his willow cudgel protect them." The classic reader will recall many a ribald ode to Priapus, whose image was generally set up in gardens. Three lines in the same poem aptly describe a Roman garden:

"Hæc circum casæ virides, et olentia late
Serpilla, et graviter spirantis copia thymbræ
Floreat, irriguumque bibant violaria fontem."

Dryden must translate the most celebrated passages on ancient flowers ("Georg.," iv. 116-146). He revels in the roses of Pæstum, "and their double spring," in succory, parsley, cucumbers, narcissus, bears'-foot, myrtles and ivy, apples, limes, pines and vines, and then describes the old Corycian gardener:

¹ "Ecls.," i. 73 and ii. 45-58; "Georg.," iv. 109, 30-32, especially 116-146. A good deal about Roman gardens may be found in Becker's "Gallus."

“ Lord of few acres, and those barren too,
Yet labouring well his little spot of ground,
Some scattering pot-herbs here and there he found ;
Which cultivated with his daily care,
And bruised with vervain, were his daily fare.
For every bloom his trees in spring afford,
An autumn apple was by tale restored.
He knew to rank his elms in even rows,
For fruit the grafted pear-tree to dispose,
And tame to plums the fountains of the floss.
With spreading planes he made a cool retreat
To shade good fellows from the summer’s heat.
Sometimes white lilies did their leaves afford,
With wholesome poppy-flow’rs to mend his homely board.
For late returning home he supped at ease,
And wisely deemed the wealth of monarchs less ;
The little of his own, because his own, did please.”

Another enumeration of garden flowers, as prettily arranged as any nosegay, will be found in the last twenty lines of Virgil’s “ *Culex*,” if that poem be his, and not merely a monkish cento.

Having spoken of prehistoric gardens, it would be unpardonable to forget the Egyptian kitchen-gardens, wherein grew the leeks, onions, and cucumbers for which the Israelites longed. The fertility of these gardens was due then, as now, to their proximity to the beneficent waters of the Nile and the alluvial soil of which they were composed. The celebrated Persian paradises were not gardens at all, but rather parks planted with knots of trees, wherein sheltered wild beasts until it pleased their owners to chase them. The “ *terai* ” on the slopes of the Himalayas at present forms a good natural example of a paradise. We have mentioned the Saxon “ *wort-yard*,” and it is worth remarking that the South of England possessed many vineyards before the Conquest, though their

grapes would not probably be highly prized at present.¹ Every monastery and convent would have its own patch of garden ground, and horticultural science in England is largely indebted to the culture and improved varieties of plants introduced by the monks. The celebrated *liqueur* which was recently made by the monks at the Grande Chartreuse shows their skill lingering to our own day, as admirably expressed by Matthew Arnold:

“The garden, overgrown—yet mild,
Those fragrant herbs are flowering there !
Strong children of the Alpine wild
Whose culture is the brethren’s care ;
Of human tasks their only one,
And cheerful works beneath the sun.”

There is a Paradyfs (Paradise) mead near the Priory of Selborne, Hants, which was probably enclosed ground, planted like an orchard with fruit-trees, and pleasantly laid out.² Jedburgh, in old days, was greatly renowned for pears; while Buckfastleigh is said to have first introduced the apple to Devon, owing to the monks at these religious houses having originally planted orchards.

Burton³ does not forget to eulogize the delights of gardens: “To walk amongst orchards, gardens, bowers, mounds, and arbours, artificial wildernesses, green thickets, arches, groves, lawns, rivulets, fountains, and such-like pleasant places, like that Antiochan Daphne, brooks, pools, fish-ponds, betwixt wood and water, in a fair meadow,

¹ See Lappenburg, “History of England,” ii. 359.

² White, “Antiquities of Selborne,” Letter 25.

³ “Anatomy of Melancholy,” ed. 1826, vol. i., p. 407.

by a river-side, must needs be a delectable recreation." And he names the prince's garden at Ferrara, Fontainebleau, "the Pope's Belvedere in Rome, as pleasing as those *horti pensiles* in Babylon, or that Indian king's delightful gardens in Ælian, or those famous gardens of the Lord Cantelow in France." Many of these wonders have been eclipsed by modern marvels of greenery; and such lordly gardens as those at Trentham, Chatsworth, Alton, and others, need fear no comparison with any predecessors. And as for botanical gardens, our own at Oxford may be worthily matched with those at Nuremberg, Montpellier, or Leyden.

From Saxondom to Chaucer is a long leap, but the scantiness of chronicles, and the little leisure granted men for gardening in the intermediate ages, compel us to take it. With his pure love for flowers and the country, Chaucer delights to dwell upon the gardens of his time. Thus, in the "Romaunt of the Rose," is a garden, lying four-square, enclosed within walls "instede of hegge":

"The gardin was not daungerous
To herborowe birdes many one;
So riche a yere was nevyr none
Of birdis song and branchis grene,
Therin were birdis mo, I wene,
Than ben in all the relme of Fraunce."

It is worth while recounting the ordinary furniture of this garden, as may be gathered further on in the poem. Ordinary trees were "laureres, pine-trees, cedres, oliveres, elmis grete and strong, maplis, ashe, oke, aspe, planis long,"

“Fine ewe, popler, and lindis faire,
And othir trees full many a paire.”

Of fruit-trees appear “pomgranetts a full grete dele,” “nutmeggis,” “almandris,” “figgis, and many a date tre.”

To say nothing of the cedars, the nutmegs here show that, poet-like, Chaucer was drawing on his imagination, and that the list cannot be accepted implicitly as being the contents of a fourteenth-century garden. The next lines, the spices it contained, prove this more conclusively—“clowe, gilofre, licorice, gingeber, grein de Paris” (grains of Paradise), “canell” (cinnamon), “fetewale of pris” (valerian).

“And many homely trees there were
That peches, coines” (quinces), “and apples bere,
Medlers, plommis, peris, chesteinis,
Cherise, of whiche many one faine is,
Notis and aleis” (alife), “and bolas,
That for to fene it was folas,
With many high laurer and pine,
Was rengid clene all that gardine
With cipris and with oliveris,
Of which that nigh no plenty here is.”

If this garden had no existence in the outer world, it at all events shows what the ideal of a garden was in Chaucer's time—“the platform of a princely garden,” as Bacon says. In “The Pardonere and Tapstere,” however, we do get some idea of what a garden of herbs was like in the poet's day. Therein, he says:

“Many a herb grewe for fewe and surgery,
And all the aleys feir, and parid, and raylid, and ymakid,
The savige and the isope yfrethid and ystakid,
And other beddis by and by fresh ydight.”

In the "Assemble of Foules" the poet paints another delightful garden :

"A gardein sawe I full of blossomed bowis
Upon a rivir in a grene mede,
There as swetenessè evirmore inough is
With flowris white and blewe, yelow and rede.
And colde and clere wellestremis nothyng dede,
That swommin full of smalè fisshis light,
With finnis rede and scalis silvir bright."

Yet a third exquisitely drawn garden will be found in "The Frankleine's Tale," "of swiche pris," as if it were "the veray Paradis;" and one more in "The Merchant's Second Tale":

"This gardeyn is evir grene and full of May flowris,
Of rede, white, and blew, and other fresh colouris,
The wiche ben so redolent and sentyn so about,
That he must be right lewde therin shuld route."

The beginning of the "Complaint of the Blacke Knight" should also be read by all desirous of realizing what the gardens of the time resembled. This account of the garden's greenery contains at least one touch that should be remembered by lovers of the country:

"There sawe I growing eke the freshe hauthorne
In white motley, that so fote doth ysmell."

The gardens attached to many of the Middle-Age castles are of great interest. A good example may be seen at Stirling, of which the characteristics are the frowning walls of the castle surrounding it, the little peep at the sky which it afforded, the small scope there was for a few bushes and perhaps a low tree or two to be culti-

vated in it. In the "Knyghte's Tale" Palæmon fees his Emilia for the first time in such a garden:

"Thurgh a window thikke of many a barre
Of yren gret, and square as any sparre."

The story of the Earl of Surrey and the fair Geraldine may illustrate how frequently, in the immured life which many noble damsels must necessarily have led in troublous times, such examples of love at first sight must have occurred.

A change has come over the English garden in Elizabeth's reign. It contains more herbs and flowers, and is more daintily laid out, until it resembles

"A paradise of delight, to which compared
Thessalian Tempe, or that garden where
Venus with her revived Adonis spend
Their pleasant hours."¹

The poets now begin to lavish sentiment upon it; as, for instance, Shakespeare, from whose plays a charming Old English garden can be constructed. Richard Barnfield thus enumerates in 1594 the contents of a garden:

"Nay, more than this, I have a garden plot
Wherein there wants nor hearbs, nor roots, nor flowers,—
Flowers to smell, roots to eate, hearbs for the pot,—
And dainty shelters when the welkin lowers:
Sweet-smelling beds of lillies and of roses,
Which rosemary banks and lavender encloses.
"There growes the gilliflowre, the mynt, the dayzie,
Both red and white, the blue-eyed violet,
The purple hyacinth, the spyke to please thee,
The scarlet-dyde carnation bleeding yet.
The sage, the savory, and sweet margerum,
Isop, tyme, and eye-bright, good for the blinde and dumbe.

¹ Massinger, "Believe as You List."

“The pinke, the primrose, cowslip, and daffadilly,
 The hare-bell blue, the crimfon cullumbine,
 Sage, lettis, parsley, and the milke-white lilly,
 The rose and speckled flower cald fops-in-wine :
 Fine pretie king-cups and the yellow bootes
 That growes by rivers and by shallow brookes.

“And many thousand moe I cannot name
 Of hearbs and flowers that in garden grow.”¹

The *ars topiaria*, which cuts box, yews, hollies, and the like into the semblance of peacocks or grotesque monsters, is usually regarded as the main feature of the love for gardening which set in after the Restoration, but in truth it was but the revival of a Roman custom. *Topiarius* is the only name by which an ornamental gardener was known in good Latin authors.² Pliny says that the cypress, with its small tender evergreen leaf, readily lent itself to the designs of this functionary, whether it was required to represent hunting-scenes or fleets. The periwinkle's evergreen trailers were also pressed into his service. Similarly the acanthus was a “*topiaria et urbana herba*.” These citations show that we have adopted a part for the whole of what was anciently the topiarian's duty, viz., the cutting and trimming of shrubs; and to this the topiarian art is now confined. Pope's paper in the *Guardian*, Sept. 29, 1713,³ at once swept away the artificial greeneries then in vogue

¹ “The Affectionate Shepherd” (Percy Society, vol. xx., 1846, p. 12).

² See “Dict. of Greek and Roman Antiq.,” *sub voc.*, “Hortus,” and references there.

³ “On the Art of Gardening,” p. 61, by Mrs. Foster (Satchell, 1881).

in gardening, and a more natural taste revived. Then came the era of the landscape gardeners—"Capability" Brown and his followers. It is unnecessary to follow further the fortunes of the art. Rapin has sung the garden in Latin and Cowper in English verse; while Sir Thomas Browne, in his "Garden of Cyrus," and Evelyn in his "Acetaria" and "Sylva," have left classical treatises which no lover of a garden can afford to neglect. At present we see a decided revolt from the tyranny of ribbon-beds, zones of colour, and the frigid artificial style which has for some years found favour with society, to a more natural and less laborious character, in which simplicity far transcends art, in the eyes of all who have studied the relations between these two principles of gardening. The effects of geometrical gardening and lines of bedding-plants can be seen with more permanence in a brilliant carpet; for the delightful results of improving Nature and pressing her wildings into a decent conformity with man's needs and his sense of beauty, we must resort to some such charming piece of tutored negligence as was so daintily depicted by Lord Beaconsfield in the garden of Corifande.





CHAPTER X.

HUNTING AMONG THE ANCIENTS.

ἀμφιβαλὼν ἄγει
καὶ θηρῶν ἀγρίων ἔθνη
περιφραδῆς ἀνὴρ.

(SOPH. *Antig.*, 344.)



WITH man, as among the lower animals, necessity led to the practice of hunting. Instinct bids them each pursue what it can strike down, kill, and eat.

“ Say, will the falcon stooping from above,
Smit with her varied plumage, spare the dove ?
Admires the jay the insect’s gilded wings ?
Or hears the hawk when Philomela sings ?”¹

Hunting is a wide word, and embraces many different quarries. Nimrod was the first hunter, and his prey was man. But here hunting will be narrowed to the chase of quadrupeds. And Izaak Walton’s huntsman shall eulogize his favourite sport : “ Hunting is a game for princes and noble persons ; it hath been greatly prized in all ages ; it was one of the qualifications that Xenophon

¹ Pope, “ Essay on Man,” Ep. 3.

bestowed on his Cyrus, that he was a hunter of wild beasts. Hunting trains up the younger nobility to the use of manly exercises in their riper age. What more manly exercise than hunting the wild boar, the stag, the buck, the fox, or the hare? How doth it preserve health and increase strength and activity!" And once more: "What music doth a pack of dogs then make to any man, whose heart and ears are so happy as to be set to the tune of such instruments!"¹ When Jupiter implanted an evil nature in beasts which were at first harmless, says the Latin poet:

"Tam laqueis captare feras et fallere visco
Inventum, et magnos canibus circumdare faltus."²

In the golden age men had no knowledge of agriculture; nor were they careful to heap up riches or to be thrifty in the use of what they possessed:

"Sed rami atque asper victu venatus alebat."³

When civilization began, the hunting existence gave way to the pastoral state, and that to the settled mode of living implied by the cultivation of land. And when pleasure and luxury abound in a state, men revert for amusement to what their ancestors had been compelled to practise from necessity. In old days man hunted for his dinner; now he hunts in order to gain an appetite for it.

Horace held in high estimation hunting, and the

¹ "The Compleat Angler," i. 1.

² Virgil, "Georg.," i. 139, 140.

³ "Æn.," viii. 318.

leading out of mules laden with Ætolian toils and dogs into the country was "a work of special importance to Romans, useful for their reputation, their health, their morals, and the more so if you have strength enough either to surpass the hound in running, or conquer the boar by thews and sinews."¹ Plato, too, looks with much fondness on the chase. His model legislator is to frame enactments concerning it, "commending that kind of hunting which will make the souls of young men better, and blaming the contrary kinds." Fishing and fowling may be all very well for their professors, but hunting quadrupeds with horses and dogs, and fighting them hand to hand with missiles, as in a Homeric hunting-piece, is the only species of hunting which should be suffered among high-born youths. Any kind of setting of traps or nets, and deceiving the quarry in the dark, is hateful;² but let no one stop those who are in sober earnest sacred huntsmen, wherever and in whatsoever guise they choose to hunt. Fowling and fishing are not very noble tastes for any young man; they should be left to those who are compelled to practise these crafts in order to earn their subsistence. With the whole oriental world, hunting was held in special favour. Hunting-pieces constantly appear in Egyptian imagery. The Parthians were devoted to the chase. The Assyrian and Babylonian monarchs constructed large "paradises," as the Greeks called them,

¹ "Ep.," i. 18, 49.

² Plato, "Laws," bk. vii. 823-4.

where wild beasts found safe harbour until it pleased their masters to hold a grand hunting-party and slay them. They are described as having consisted of spacious tracts of grazing-land, with plantations, and woods, and cool streams within them, something like the Terai of Nepaul at the present day. Cyrus's whole army, in which Xenophon was serving, was reviewed in one of these.¹ The latter wrote a treatise on hunting. Varro, Arrian and Julius Pollux give much information on the same subject. Three treatises on hunting, fishing, and fowling are also ascribed to Oppian. The epitaph on the tomb of Darius shews the keenness of the Persians for the chase: "I was a friend to friends; I became the most skilful of horsemen and archers; I was a master in the art of hunting; I could do all things."² When Paulus Æmilius subdued Macedonia, he is said to have brought away the hounds and hunting-establishment of Perseus, the conquered king, to Rome, and given them to his son Scipio Æmilianus. With the Germans, again, "their whole life was spent in hunting and the studies of warfare," says Cæsar.³ In our own time these have been the only resources of the North American Indians. Fighting and hunting all over the world form the amusements of every vigorous race in the infancy of civilization.

¹ See Lord Cockburn's article on "Ancient Hunting," in the *Nineteenth Century*, October, 1880; and for ancient authorities, Kreyfig G. C., "Bibliotheca Scriptorum Venaticorum." 1750, 8vo, Altenburgi.

² Strabo, xv. 3, 8.

³ "De Bell. Gall.," vi. 21.

Homer celebrates Scamandrius as an early hunter, "for Artemis herself taught him to hurl his darts at all the wild monsters which the wood on the mountains nourishes." So Virgil's Lausus was "equûm domitor debellatorque ferarum."¹ Many beautiful hunting-pictures may be found in Homer, and from no subject so frequently as the chase, are the similes in the "Iliad" drawn. Lion and wild-boar hunting are specially dear to Homer. Here is a specimen: "As when among dogs and hunters a wild boar or lion turns hither and thither, rejoicing in his strength, and they, having drawn themselves up tower-wise, stand opposite it and hurl from their hands many javelins, but its stout heart never quails or dreads, and its own nobility proves its death."² The dogs were taught to seize these animals from behind, and "trusted in their swift feet." The hunters cheered on their hounds. Here is another picture which reminds us of Snyder's hunting-pieces: "As when hounds and impetuous youths pursue a wild boar, and he breaks covert from the thick brushwood, sharpening his gleaming tusk with crooked jaws; around him they press, but low down comes the gnashing of his tusks, and they await his charge, dreadful though he be, so," etc. Again: "But they, as when dogs and rustics have chased a stag with large antlers, or a boar, and it steep rock and thick coverts have sheltered, nor is it fated for them to light upon it, but at their shouting a lion

¹ "Iliad," v. 51.

² *Ibid.*, xii. 41; viii. 338; xi. 293; xi. 414; xv. 271.

with patriarchal mane appears on the road and quickly puts them to flight, eager as they are, so," etc. Once more: "But they rushed forth and fought before the gates, like wild swine which have awaited in the mountains the advancing uproar of men and dogs, and rushing sideways, break up the thicket around them, cutting it up by the roots, and from beneath rises a gnashing of tusks, until some one is smitten and loses his life."¹

The most lifelike of all Homer's hunting-pieces, however, is found in the "Odyssey." It seems to have been studied from an actual occurrence, so fresh and animated are the verses which embalm it. They relate how, in his youth, the hero received the wound on the leg by which, on his return from his twenty years' wandering, his old nurse Euryclea discovered him. "They fared up the steep hill of wood-clad Parnassus, and quickly they came to the windy hollows. Now the sun was but just striking on the fields, and was come forth from the soft flowing stream of deep Oceanus. Then the beaters reached a glade of woodland, and before them the hounds ran tracking a scent, but behind came the sons of Autolycus, and among them goodly Odysseus followed close on the hounds, swaying a long spear. Thereby in a

¹ "Iliad," xii. 146. Xenophon in his "Treatise on Hunting" speaks but little of hunting ferocious animals. Hare-hunting is his delight. He describes all the knots, slips, snares, etc., necessary for it, with all the detail of accomplishments and tools suited to the mediæval angler. (See Muir's "Literature of Ancient Greece," vol. v., p. 477, etc.)

thick lair was a great boar lying, and through the coppice the force of the wet winds blew never, neither did the bright sun light on it with his rays, nor could the rain pierce through, so thick it was, and of fallen leaves there was great plenty therein. Then the noise of the men's feet, and of the dogs came upon the boar, as they pressed on in their hunting, and forth from his lair he sprang towards them, with his back well bristled and fire shining in his eyes, and stood at bay before them all. Then Odysseus was the first to rush in, holding his spear aloft in his strong hand, most keen to smite; but the boar was too quick for him, and struck him above the knee, ripping through much flesh as he charged sideways, but he reached not to the bone of the man. But Odysseus smote at his right shoulder and hit it, so that the point of the bright spear went clean through, and the boar fell in the dust with a cry, and his life passed from him."¹ This is exactly the place where the "pigsticker" on the plains of India still endeavours to transfix a wild boar, another proof that the lines may have been inspired by some personal adventure of Homer. The woes of the hunter, "as he ranges over the peaks of the mountains," are feelingly dwelt upon by Homer,² recalling Horace's "venator sub Jove frigido."

A common mode of hunting large animals was by enclosing them with a ring of men and dogs, through which it was difficult to break. "As a

¹ "Odyssey," xix. 431-454 (Butcher and Lang).

² *Ibid.*, ix. 121.

lion deeply ponders among a crowd of men, in fear when they draw round him the crafty circle," says Homer.¹ The custom lasted till recent times in Scotland, and the ring thus formed was known as the *Tinchel*:

"We'll quell the savage mountaineer
As their Tinchel cows the game."²

A peep at the implements of ancient forest-craft is allowed us in Virgil's celebrated hunting-scene, when Æneas and Dido went forth together on a fateful morn, "wide-meshed nets, toils, and boar-spears with broad steel heads."³ Along with these were the *alæ*—coloured feathers fastened on ropes, which were suspended so as to allow them to flutter in the wind and terrify the wild creatures till they dashed into the series of toils⁴ which were set for their capture:

"Dum trepidant alæ saltusque indagine cingunt."⁵

In another splendid passage, describing the manner in which during winter the Northern nations capture deer, the poet again introduces these "alæ." The stags are found in herds, half smothered in snow, which their horns can hardly surmount (something in the fashion of moose in a Canadian "yard"); "these they slay with steel at

¹ "Odyssey," iv. 791.

² "Lady of the Lake," vi. 17.

³ "Æneid," iv. 131.

⁴ For the manner in which the toils were set, compare

"The toils are pitched and the flakes are set,
Ever sing merrily, merrily."

("Lady of the Lake," iv. 25.)

⁵ "Æneid," iv. 121.

close quarters, without slipping hounds at them, without any toils, nor do they terrify the timorous creatures by the fear of the fluttering crimson feather, as they vainly thrust at the mass of snow opposing escape, and bellow hoarsely.”¹ Our English Bible, in Isa. xxiv. 17, reproduces the hunting terms of the Vulgate, “*formido et fovea et laqueus*,” “fear and the pit and the snare;” but the Hebrew word for “fear” does not seem to have the technical meaning of “*formido*” as a hunting term. To return to Dido’s hunting; Dryden here rises to the occasion:

“Now had they reached the hills and stormed the seat
Of savage beasts in dens, their last retreat;
The cry pursues the mountain goats, they bound
From rock to rock and keep the craggy ground.
Quite otherwise the stags, a trembling train
In herds unfingled, scour the dusty plain,
And a long chase in open view maintain.
The glad Ascanius, as his courser guides,
Spurs through the vale, and these and those outrides,
His horse’s flanks and sides are forced to feel
The clanking lash and goring of the steel.
Impatiently he views the feeble prey,
Wishing some nobler beast to cross his way;
And rather would the tusky boar attend,
Or see the tawny lion downward bend.”²

Somerville is distinctively the poet of the chase, but his wordy blank verse does not compare favourably with the vigorous, swift rhymes of Dryden. Hear the latter, when untrammelled by

¹ “*Georg.*,” iii. 372: “*Puniceæve agitant pavidos formidine pennæ.*” “*Formido*” is a technical hunting term signifying any terror tricked up with feathers.

² “*Æneid.*,” iv. 151-159.

the needs of translation, on the chase of the king of beasts :

“ So Libyan huntsmen on some sandy plain,
From shady coverts roused the lion chase ;
The kingly beast roars out with loud disdain,
And slowly moves, unknowing to give place.

“ But if some one approach to dare his force,
He swings his tail and swiftly turns him round,
With one paw seizes on his trembling horse,
And with the other tears him to the ground.”¹

One or two hunting pictures will show the felicitous touch of Virgil. To begin with the wild boar, “animal propter convivium natum” (Juvenal, i. 141); no finer and more lifelike scene could be painted than that in “Æneid,” x. 708-16: “And as that wild boar, driven from the lofty mountains by the grip of hounds whom pine-bearing Vesulus has sheltered for many a year, and many years also the Laurentian marsh, having battened on the tall reeds, after it has come to the nets, is wont to stand still, and fiercely gnash his tusks and set up his bristling flanks, nor has anyone the courage to dare his rage or draw near, but from afar men ply him with darts and safe clamours. He then, fearless, delays his charge, first on one side, then on another, champing his teeth, and shaking off the javelins from his hide, so,” etc. In contradistinction to the timidity of these hunters, a coin of Nero shows a man boldly confronting a wild boar with a short steel spear. In another passage the chase of a stag by an

¹ “Annus Mir.,” 381.

Umbrian hound, a variety much valued by ancient hunters, is beautifully described:¹

“ Thus, when a fearful stag is closed around
 With crimson toils, or in a river found,
 High on the bank the deep-mouthed hound appears
 Still opening, following still, where'er he steers ;
 The persecuted creature, to and fro,
 Turns here and there to 'scape his Umbrian foe ;
 Steep is th' ascent, and if he gains the land
 The purple death is pitched along the strand ;
 His eager foe, determined to the chase,
 Stretched at his length, gains ground at every pace ;
 Now to his beamy head he makes his way,
 And now he holds, or thinks he holds, his prey ;
 Just at the pinch the stag springs out with fear,
 He bites the wind, and fills his sounding jaws with air.
 The rocks, the lakes, the mountains, ring with cries,
 The mortal tumult mounts and thunders in the skies.”

DRYDEN.

The English poet amplifies the original into twice the number of lines, without augmenting in any sensible degree his Roman brother's imagery ; and careful, and in some of the lines excellent, as is the translation, to feel the more chastened beauty of the Latin tongue the reader should consult the original, which is terse, vivid, and cumulative in interest in the highest degree. Indeed, without reference to Virgil, most English readers will be hopelessly confused about the meaning of Dryden's line :

“ The purple death is pitched along the strand.”

Another characteristic description, replete with Virgil's ornate tendernefs, might be quoted—the chase of Silvia's pet stag by Ascanius and his

¹ “ *Æneid*,” xii. 749-757. For “ *puniceæ septum formidine pennæ*,” see note I, p. 150.

hounds (“Æneid,” vii. 483 *seq.*) ; but a still more pathetic image—the comparison of the love-sick Dido to a stricken hind—claims precedence: “The flame of love devours her unresisting heart, and the silent wound lives and glows beneath her breast. Unhappy Dido is consumed by its fires, and wanders demented through the whole city, as a hind smitten by the arrow which from afar, as she incautiously roamed the Cretan groves, a shepherd has transfixed while shooting, and unwittingly left his winged steel rankling in the wound. She, in flight, rushes through the Dictæan woods and lawns in vain ; the deadly arrow clings to her side” (“Æneid,” iv. 66).

Hunting chiefly went on in the wintry months with the Romans, as it does with us. “Then,” says Virgil, “is the time to lay snares for cranes, and set nets for stags, and pursue the long-eared hares ; then, too, should a man whirl round his head the thongs of the Balearic sling and slay the hinds, when the snow lies deep, when the rivers sweep along masses of ice” (“Georg.,” i. 307). And so the love-sick Gallus sings: “Meanwhile, together with the Nymphs, I will wander over Mænalus or chase fierce boars ; no cold shall prevent my surrounding the Parthenian groves with my hounds. I seem to be hurrying through rocks and resounding thickets, my delight to wing Cretan shafts from a bow tipped with Parthian horn—as if these things could avail against my madness!” (“Eclogues,” x. 56). The Romans of later days possessed at their villas *vivaria* or

leporaria, which were enclosures holding not merely hares for the purpose of hunting, but even wild boars. These enclosures (resembling the Persian paradises), were also called *roboraria*, from their strong oak palings.¹

Such was the enthusiasm for hunting under the early Cæsars that Juvenal satirizes the noble matron who with naked breast like an Amazon meets the rush of a wild boar and transfixes him with her spear (i. 22). Nets and enclosures for deer were frequent in England so early as the Conquest. Roe-deer were thus taken in Lancashire, as we learn from "Domesday Book," where a certain Roger had a "*haia capreolis capiendis*."² Mr. Harting explains this passage thus: "The 'haia,' 'haye,' or 'haie,' as it is variously spelled, properly signified the hedge or fence enclosing a forest or park, but by an easy metonymy the word was transferred from the enclosing fence to the area enclosed by it. In the case of the roe-deer it doubtless implied an enclosed area, into which the animals were driven, and having outlets here and there across which nets were hung for their entanglement and capture." In the Middle Ages these enclosures were called *parci* or *saltatoria*. A strong infusion of the hunting element came into England with the Northmen, whose two chief amusements were fighting and hunting. Everyone will remember

¹ See a discussion on these terms in Aulus Gellius, ii. 20.

² See a good paper on the "Roe Deer," *Pop. Science Review*, April, 1881, p. 138.

the famous wild boar of Northern Mythology, Sarhimner, who was hunted every day by the heroes in Walhalla, and feasted upon every night, and then miraculously came to life again next day for another chase, thus affording eternal amusement to his pursuers.

Time would fail to recount the different modes of hunting which succeeded the use of nets and toils, of the crossbow-shooting and slipping of dogs at deer practised in and after the Norman period of English history. Our purpose is but to touch upon the early phases of the sport. He who would know something of hunting in the Middle Ages should consult the quaint treatise on it—earliest in the language—in the “Boke of St. Albans,” 1486, or the fuller pages of Jacques de Fouilloux, 1650. Beckford and Surtees bring the art of fox-hunting—to which most English hunting has shrunk—down to our own days. Vanière, the Jesuit poet, well describes the moral uses of hunting:

“Nobilium labor ille virûm est, bellicue cruenti
Dulce rudimentum ; juvenes exercita cursu
Corpora venando durant ad frigus et æstum,
Corda sibi generosa parant, animamque capacem
Mortis, et expertem media inter tela pavoris ;
Exercent et ad arma manus ; astuque ferarum
Ac nemorum insidiis et bellica furta docentur
Hostilesque dolos.”¹

¹ “Præd. Rusticum,” lib. xvi.





CHAPTER XI.

THE ROMANS AS ACCLIMATISERS IN BRITAIN.



MUCH as Great Britain owes to Rome for her gifts of literature and law, civilization was even more largely aided by her in the ordinary conveniences of daily life. The arts of building and road-making among us retain monuments which at the present day and for many ages to come will show the eminence of the Romans in these necessary arts. Even stone buildings with windows and chimneys were first erected by them. It was not probable that Rome, having succeeded in pacifying the country, should not introduce along with improved processes of agriculture, and in villas rivalling those of Italy or the south of France, plants and animals to fill the farmyards and gardens. Indeed, an involuntary introduction of them necessarily attends any invasion on a large scale. Weeds and wayside flowers hitherto unknown to France followed, during the war of 1870-71, the invading footsteps of the Germans.

The lapse of time, too, during which plants and animals could be brought by the Romans to a friendly population in Britain should be noted. The country was subdued and settled by Suetonius, Paulinus and Agricola before the end of the first century after Christ, and, in spite of many vicissitudes, the Romans did not finally withdraw from Britain until the beginning of the fifth century, when the assaults of the Goths and the calamities engendered by intestine wars were rapidly breaking up the Empire. The independence of Britain was declared by Honorius, the lawful Emperor of the West, in 410, by his celebrated letter bidding the Britons provide for their own safety against the marauding Saxons, Picts, and Scots. But it was not only during this period of Britain's existence as a province for some 400 years that intercourse with Rome continued. The moral supremacy of that ancient centre of both mental and material civilization was fully recognised during the reigns of Saxon and Danish kings. Save in the mountainous fastnesses, the country was studded with temples, basilicas, baths, and bridges, for which it was indebted to Rome. And yet, however skilled the Romans were in husbandry, it is noticeable that all the agricultural implements used among the Saxons, which have come down to our days, bear German names. The same is the case with the names of the measures of land—rood, acre, and the like.¹ The arts and sciences, however, regarded Rome as the centre of inspira-

¹ Lappenberg, "History of England," vol. ii., p. 359.

tion, until the hordes of Saxon invaders almost destroyed the old civilization. Thule, according to the satirist, had engaged her rhetorician in the first century, and British eloquence was not unknown to the capital of the Western world before the fifth century. British Christianity more than any other cause contributed, after the Romans had left Britain, to the influences of the imperial city being still cherished. British saints and British heretics alike swelled the fame of their country, and promoted direct intercourse with Rome. The waves of Teutonic deluge swept over the land, and well-nigh obliterated all traces of Roman civilization, save those which were too massive to be readily overthrown. With the coming of Augustine, Rome again, and more powerfully than before, because she now subjugated the souls of the people, resumed her sway in humanizing Britain, and introducing fresh elements of civilization. It becomes an interesting question, in considering the evidences which yet remain of the material conveniences of life which Rome contributed to our land, to determine what plants and animals she brought to our island.

The question is complicated by the fact of there having been two other epochs, since Roman influences worked, to which the introduction of many plants and animals, now fairly domesticated among us, may be referred: the return of Western chivalry from the Crusades and the influx of monks which overspread Britain during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The latter of these

causes was undoubtedly the more considerable, and to the Cistercians and Benedictine monasteries, which gradually sprang up over the country, modern England owes most of her smaller cultivated plants and fruits. Devonshire yet recognises the parent of her modern cider orchards in Buckland Monachorum, while the pears of Jedburgh are famous in the Border districts. Ages before the coming of the Romans, neolithic man on the Continent, according to Professor Heer, cultivated eight cereals, together with peas, poppies, flax, caraway-seeds, apples, pears, and bullaces; but it is probable that few of these latter plants had found their way to Britain until the Roman invasions. Italy herself was very hospitable to the animals and trees of the East, when she subjugated one by one its different countries; and as she swept into her own bosom all their gems and works of art, so was she forward to accept and foster animals or vegetables which were likely to minister to her profit or convenience. Virgil (*"Georg.,"* ii. 64-71) enumerates a few of the latter, Paphian myrtles, the huge ash, the poplar for making garlands in honour of Hercules; the Grecian oaks, pines, hazels, planes, horse-chestnuts, mountain-ashes, pears, and cherries—even palms, though these would not bear fruit in Italy, and were useful only for their leaves. In short, Italy was a nursery in which the plants and fruits of the world were domesticated.¹ Nothing was more natural than

¹ Columella, iii. 9, 5, "*His tamen exemplis nimirum admonemur curæ mortalium obsequentissimam esse Italiam, quæ*

that she should bestow on the West a few of the comforts of life which she herself had received from the East.

To take these in order, we may begin with quadrupeds. In the few touches with which Cæsar paints the fauna and flora of Britain, he says ("De Bell. Gall.," v. 12), "pecorum magnus numerus;" and further on, "lacte et carne vivunt." These domesticated oxen and sheep were legacies from neolithic man. The oxen in all probability were the ancestors of the few wild cattle at present living in Chillingham Park and a few other localities, the *bos taurus* of Linnæus. Another species, the short-horned Celtic ox (*b. longifrons*), although its remains have been found in Britain associated with those of the elephant and rhinoceros, was domesticated in England during the Roman period, and supplied the legionaries with food. It seems likely that our Welsh and Highland cattle, and also the red Devon breed, are descended from it; and that the Romans were either the first to domesticate it in Britain, or else that they introduced a better breed than that already in subjection to the Britons. Owing to the numerous divergent breeds of oxen, at present it is difficult to ascertain the original species.

The ass, the mule, and the goat were also introduced from Rome. Fossil forms of the ass and goat have been found in Britain, but most naturalists now believe that our ass is descended

pæne totius orbis fruges adhibito studio colonorum ferre didicerit."

from the *equus tæniopus* of Abyssinia, and our goats from the *capra ægagrus* of the mountains of Asia, possibly mingled with the allied Indian species *c. falconieri*.¹ They filtered to us through Roman influences. The cat also came from Rome, as has been shewn in another chapter. The fallow-deer had existed in Great Britain in prehistoric times, but seems to have become extinct before the Roman period, and modern so-called "wild" fallow-deer in Scotland are all descended from escaped specimens, descendants of those brought to our island from Rome.² This deer is originally an inhabitant of the districts bordering on the Mediterranean.

The rabbit, although often deemed indigenous to Britain, is another native of the Cisalpine countries of the Mediterranean basin, and is plentiful in Greece and parts of Italy.³ Cæsar says that the ancient Britons did not deem it lawful to taste the flesh of the hare, the hen, and the goose, but says nothing of the rabbit.⁴ Martial has a well-known couplet on the animal:

"Gaudet in effossis habitare cuniculus antris,
Monstravit tacitas hostibus ille vias." ⁵

This useful (or destructive) animal, as the case may be, also came to us from Rome. When John, Earl of Morton (Mortain in Normandy),

¹ Darwin, "Domestication of Plants and Animals," vol. i., pp. 65 and 105.

² Alston, "Fauna of Scotland," 1880, p. 24; and Bell, "Brit. Quads.," ed. 2, p. 358.

³ Bell, *ut sup.*, p. 343.

⁴ "Bell. Gall.," v. 12.

⁵ Martial, xiii. 60.

gave by grant immunities to his tenants outside the regard of Dartmoor Forest, he expressly allows them to take the roe, fox, wild-cat, wolf, hare, and otter, but no mention is made of the rabbit, which, perhaps, was not common yet in that district. So in the accounts of Exeter College, Oxford, for 1361, 12d. is charged for four ducks, 11d. for two sucking-pigs, 1d. for onions, and 8d. for rabbits.¹ They were probably 4d. or 5d. each, as they were then scarce. From us this animal has found its way with disastrous consequences to Australasia.

Turning next to birds, we will begin with what Lucretius beautifully calls—

“Aurea pavonum ridenti imbuta lepore
Sæcla.”²

Peacocks are natives of the Indian jungles; and so Curtius, speaking of Alexander the Great's expedition, says: “Thence they marched through a desert to the river Hydraotes” (now the Ravee in the Punjaub). “Adjoining it was a wood, gloomy with trees elsewhere unknown, and filled with a multitude of wild peacocks.” Solomon imported peacocks from the Indian Ocean. It was a bird unknown to Homer, and was received by the Greeks from the Persians; the Greek, Persian, and Hebrew names for the bird being very much alike. Its feathers were used for luxury in Greece and Rome, and the bird itself formed a celebrated *plât* at banquets. For this purpose those which

¹ “Register of Exeter College,” 1879, p. ix (note).

² Lucretius, ii. 502.

came from the Isle of Samos were most valued.¹ Horace does not forget the peacock at his feasts, and Juvenal satirizes the indigestion of the glutton who "carries a whole peacock inside him when he goes to the bath" (i. 143). This proud bird was sacred to Juno, and is often found on the coins of the Cæsars as a sign of the "consecratio" of their female relatives, just as the eagle pointed to the apotheosis of the males of that family. There can be no doubt that our lordly terraces are indebted to the Romans for their peacocks.² The pheasant is another bird of brilliant plumage which also came to us from Rome. Its home is Colchis; so Statius says to gluttons: "Ah, miserable men who delight to know how far *the bird of Phasis* surpasses the wintry crane of Rhodope" ("Sylv.," iv. 7). Aristophanes also tells us that pheasants were dear to gluttons. Pliny notices that in Colchis the pheasant could raise and depress two earlike feathers. Both peacock and pheasant were probably brought to Britain to grace the villas of its Roman conquerors.³ Guinea-fowls also arrived in Britain at the same time. They were known as Numidian or African fowls to the Roman poets, from their

¹ Aulus Gell., vii. 16.

² The peacock is mentioned in Chaucer, "Romaunt of the Rose;" and Professor Rogers thinks it was not introduced until the thirteenth century (Greenwell and Rolleston's "British Barrows," 1877, p. 744).

³ In 1199 a certain W. Brewer was licensed to have "free-warren throughout all his own lands for hares, *pheasants*, and partridges" (Dugdale); so the pheasant was at that time acclimatized in English woodlands.

native home. Martial calls them "Numidian spotted fowls," which exactly describes their beautiful plumage. Varro, writing some thirty years B.C., says that they were the most recent addition to the glutton's *menu*. Geese and ducks would naturally be domesticated by the Britons, as soon as they settled down into an agricultural life, from the wild species, but improved varieties were brought over by the Romans. The turtle-dove, a native of India, is said to be another introduction. The jungle-cock of the Indian forests had already made its appearance together with the neolithic man in Britain. The use of the falcon, too, in fowling has with some probability, seeing how popular is falconry in Persia and the East, been ascribed to the Romans, from whom our ancestors would learn it, and then excel their teachers with native birds.

The trees and vegetables which have been introduced from the Mistress of the World open a much larger question. When the curtain rises upon our island and history begins, Cæsar observes upon its vegetation: "*Materia cujusque generis, ut in Gallia est, præter fagum atque abietem*" ("Bello Gallico," v. 12). The meaning of this is uncertain, and has been the subject of much comment. We take it to mean that, besides the ordinary trees of France, there grew beech and Scotch fir as well in Britain. Geologically connected as our island had been with Holland and the neighbouring countries, it is inconceivable that the beech should not have been an indigenous tree, as it certainly is at present in Bucks, con-

sidering the vast woods of beech which now wave in Denmark. Our modern Scotch firs were undoubtedly introduced into England from Scotland in the reign of James I.; but many facts lead to the conclusion that the tree had existed in early times in our country and then become extinct. Another interpretation regards the passage as meaning that British vegetation was similar to that of France, except in possessing the beech and fir. At any rate, the small-leaved elm is of Roman introduction, though the wych-elm is as distinctively indigenous as are our two species of British oak. The cypress and Oriental plane, laurel and myrtle, ilex, fumach and arbutus, are all of them gifts from Rome. The true rhododendron or oleander (*nerium* of Pliny) also came to us from Rome, as the Romans had themselves received it from Greece. It is poisonous, says the old natural historian, to goats and sheep, but a remedy to man against the bites of serpents.

Many of our fruit-trees have an Eastern origin, and came to us through Rome. The walnut (*Anglicè*, "strange nut") is an Eastern tree. Those of Persia were regarded by the Romans as being best, and were called "royal."¹ Like the rice at present in fashion at our marriages, the walnut was highly esteemed at nuptial ceremonies of the ancients. The peach was also a Persian tree, hence called *persica* by the Romans, the French *pêche*, our peach. The apricot also by its name testifies to the sunny lands of its

¹ Pliny, "Hist. Nat.," xv. 22.

original home. Filberts have become so common in our copses that they might be regarded as indigenous did we not know that the nut originally came from Pontus to Rome, and was thus sometimes called the *nux Pontica*. Those of Thafos were celebrated. It abounded in the district round Avellano in Campania, whence comes the botanical name of the hazel, *corylus Avellana*, Lin.¹ Quinces, mulberries, chestnuts, and plums are more benefactions of Rome, and of course vines and figs. There were no cherries in Italy before the victories of Lucullus. He brought them to Rome, and in 120 years the tree penetrated beyond the sea, says Pliny,² into Britain. Besides the five species of roses which Bentham deems indigenous, the *R. Gallica*, Ayrshire, and China roses are also due to Roman commerce. Of other flowers, the lily, *crocus vernus*, tulip, lilac, ranunculus, hyacinth, dianthus caryophyllus (clove-pink), sweet-william, came from Rome.³ Flax and hemp, those most useful allies of civilization, came from the East to Rome and thence to us.

Passing from the flower to the kitchen-garden, our peas and cucumbers came across with the Roman conquerors. Who does not remember Virgil's Corycian old man, and his well-ordered garden? and how

"Tortus per herbam
Cresceret in ventrem cucumis."⁴

¹ Pliny ; and Daubeney, "Trees and Shrubs of the Ancients," p. 6.

² Pliny, "Hist. Nat.," xv. 25.

³ See Victor Hehn.

⁴ "Georg.," iv. 121.

Leeks, onions, and garlic reached England also from Rome, as they came there from the East. In Egypt they were esteemed sacred, and even gods, so that oaths were taken upon them. Hence Juvenal lashes the Egyptians (xv. 9):

“Porrum et cæpe nefas violare ac frangere morfu ;
O sanctas gentes, quibus hæc nascuntur in hortis
Numina.”

It will be remembered how the Jews on leaving Egypt grumbled at missing “the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely ; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic” (Numbers xi. 5). Their fondness for these latter dainties gave them that “fœtor Judaicus” which was popularly ascribed to them by the ancients, and which the garlic-eating natives of Italy and Spain have now inherited. When Marcus Aurelius was travelling through Palestine into Egypt, he was much disgusted at the crowds of strongly-smelling Jews which flocked around him, and is said to have exclaimed : “O Marcomanni, O Quadi, O Sarmatæ, tandem alios vobis inertiores inveni !”¹ Mr. Darwin in his last book shews that the earthworm’s greatest vegetable dainty is an onion. Herodotus saw engraved on one of the pyramids the exact amount which had been expended during its building on radishes, onions, and garlic for the workmen, and was told by his interpreter that the sum was 1,600 talents of silver.² The strip of land

¹ Amm. Marcel. xxii. 5, 5 (quoted by Victor Hehn).

² Herod., ii. 125.

bordering the Nile on each side of its course which forms Egypt is nothing but a natural garden of the greatest fertility; hence its store of grateful and appetizing vegetables.

The art of grafting and of confining fermenting liquors in jars with corks also came to Britain from Rome. Whether beer, the national drink of Wales and England, was first brewed here by the Romans admits of a doubt. In Egypt, where there were no vines, the natives drank a wine made from barley, to which Æschylus seems to allude when he makes his King of the Argives say: "You will not find the men of this country drinking wine made of barley."¹ But it is more than probable, judging from what we know of savage races in Africa, that the Britons struck out the process of fermentation, whereby a certain kind of beer was produced, for themselves. Virgil's words imply this in his beautiful picture of life in the North of Europe, which is yet true there in many points of Christmas revellings:

"Advolvere focus ulmos, ignique dedere,
Hic noctem ludo ducunt, et pocula læti
Fermento atque acidis imitantur vitea forbis."

Although a popular couplet ascribes the coming of hops to England to a much later date, probably they, too, were first imported by the Romans. The art of making butter has also been sometimes attributed to Rome; but from the analogy of the Scythians and other pastoral

¹ Herod., ii. 77; Æsch., "Supp.," 953; Virg., "Georg.," iii. 376 (Victor Hehn).

nations, it is most likely to have been practised in England long before the Roman invasion.

Ordinary wayside plants and weeds, again, have been largely reinforced by recruits from Rome. Here, again, it is impossible clearly to settle which plants entered England with the Romans, and which came in after-days along with monkish contributions to British gardens; but one species (if not three) of nettles is certainly to be attributed to the earlier gardeners. Our red poppies, too, and a vast number of cornfield feeds, seem to have immigrated from the Italian farms. That rare English plant, the *astrantia major*, has been asserted to be another Roman immigrant. It is only found at present about Ludlow and Malvern. Lastly may be added to the long list of Italian benefactions the knowledge of keeping bees in hives. Wild man everywhere feeds on honey, but to preserve the stock near habitations, and at stated times to procure the produce of the swarms, is the teaching of civilization. Instruction in bee-keeping was a fitting gift from the nation which has produced the best poem on bees as yet known to the world.

There are no allusions, either in Homer or the Bible, to the invention of hives. Messrs. Greenwell and Rolleston¹ “learn from Professor Westwood that, according to Spinola, our domestic species *apis mellifica* rarely occurs in Liguria; and he suggests that this shews either that the Ligures

¹ “British Barrows” (Appendix on the Flora and Fauna of the Neolithic Period), Oxford, 1877, p. 719 *seq.*

were not the colonizers of Wales, as has been affirmed, or that they did not bring their bee *a. ligustica* with them."

A few more notes may be added from the same authors' excellent Appendix, explanatory of some of our statements. The ash and beech are not indigenous in Scotland, though common now in some of the northern districts. They controvert Daubeny's statement that the beech was not known in England until the Norman Conquest, and consider that by the tree mentioned by Cæsar as *abies*, he meant the "silver fir." We regard it, however, as meaning the Scotch fir. The yew and the juniper were for ages the only other representatives of the Coniferæ in the island. The small-leaved lime they consider as probably indigenous, if not the *tilia Europæa*. It was useful for matting, which is an invention older than weaving. In the "Romaunt of the Rose," "The Assembly of Foules," and "The Complaint of the Blacke Knight," Chaucer gives three lists of trees which may be taken as the representatives of English woodlands in the fourteenth century. We will name some of these: laurels, pines, cedars, olives, pomegranates, nutmegs, almonds, figs, dates, in a "gardin" which seems a fanciful assemblage; for he adds "many homely trees," peches, coines (quinces), apples, medlers, plommis, peris, chesteinis, cherise, nottes, aleis (alise, Fr., the lote-tree), bolas (bullace), maplis, ashe, oke, aspe, planis, ewe, popler, lindis (limes), boxe, cypres, and

"the freshe hauthorne
In white motley that so sote doeth ysmell."

It is easy from this list to fancy the park and garden scenery of Chaucer's times.

With regard to the common fowl, there is no evidence, they say, of it in neolithic interments in this country. They hold that it probably came with the peacock by the way of Babylon to Greece and Rome rather than by the Red Sea. It is known from Buddhist writings that the ancient Indian merchants took peacocks to Babylon. As a pendant to Chaucer's vegetation the following pre-Roman landscape may be cited: "The contemplation of a herd of dark-coloured mountain cattle in the north of this country, of small size, and yet with ragged 'ill-filled' out contours, standing on a wintry day in a landscape filled with birch, oak, alder, heath and bracken, has often struck me as giving a picture which I might take as being very probably not wholly unlike that which the eyes of the ancient British herdsman were familiar with" (p. 744).





CHAPTER XII.

VIRGIL AS AN ORNITHOLOGIST.

IT is not surprising that Virgil, with his keen sense of natural beauty and exquisite play of fancy, loved to lighten his verse with the swift wings and happy songs of birds. All poets turn naturally to these artless songsters. But Virgil's lines betray here and there that he loved and studied the ways of his native birds in a manner very unusual in his time. Birds are introduced, indeed, in his pictures of country life, or as illustrations of human pathos in the conventional manner of ordinary poets, as he had inherited the custom from Homer, and as Pope did in the last century;¹ but the felicitous images and wording of many passages shew that he had closely studied bird-life, and seized upon new and striking traits in it for the embellishment of his poems. Born at Andes, now Pietola, a hamlet near Mantua,

¹ See Pope's celebrated lines, for instance, on a pheasant in the "Windfor Forest," and the "lonely woodcock," "clamorous lapwing," and "mounting lark" of the same pastoral.

and spending much of his manhood as well as all his impressionable youth in that district of marsh and hill, while the Po, Father of waters, rolled along but a few miles from his father's house ; with glimpses of distant mountains, now shrouded in mists, now painted with the flying tints of morn and evening, while murmurs of pines and running waters were everywhere around him, it was only natural that the birds which haunted his native fields should become dear to Virgil. In spite of more than one attempt of the lawless soldiers, whom the chances of civil war had planted in his neighbourhood, to dispossess him, he seems to have dwelt, more or less, on his father's estate till he died. In sooth, it was a fit home for a poet, a realization of an English brother's dream centuries afterwards:

“Happy the man whose wish and care
A few paternal acres bound,
Content to breathe his native air
In his own ground.

“Sleep found by night ; study and ease
Together mix'd ; sweet recreation,
And innocence, which most does please
With meditation.”

The ancients, aided by hints from his own writings, depict for us Virgil's home as having been about three miles from the city Mantua, on high ground, running down towards it ; and the estate—that “angle of ground which had charms beyond all others for him”—as spreading over the roots of the hilly district between the Mincio and Po ; on the upper part scant of herbage and stony, on the lower somewhat marshy and low-lying :

“Qua se subducere colles
Incipiunt, mollique jugum demittere clivo,
Usque ad aquam et veteres jam fracta cacumina, fagos.”¹

Thus it combined for the great Latin poet those striking features of mountain and marshland which in our own days have respectively nurtured a Wordsworth and a Tennyson. Many passages from Virgil's poetry could be pointed out in which he has felicitously depicted the scenery of both districts; and in those of the marsh country some touches remind us at times of a kindred art, as seen in Mr. Millais's beautiful picture of “Chill October.” For instance (“Ecl.,” i. 48):

“Quamvis lapis omnia nudus,
Limosoque palus obducat pascua junco ;”

and (*ibid.*, 56) the boundary hedge:

“Vicino ab limite fepes
Hyblæis apibus florem depasta salicti ;”

and more closely still (“Ecl.,” vii. 12):

“Hic virides tenera prætexit arundine ripas
Mincius, eque sacra resonant examina quercu.”

Among all his descriptions of bird-life it is small wonder that he loved most ardently the birds of marsh and river-side, swans, cranes, halcyons, and the like on the one hand; and those of the cliff and bare hillside on the other, eagles and hawks; but the former class decidedly predominates. As for the smaller tribes of twittering songsters inhabiting the ordinary bushes and brakes, he seems not to have bestowed a thought on them. A

¹ “Ecl.,” ix. 7.

bird to deserve his notice, and win an endless life in his melodious verse, must not only be of a marked and fine species, but also, in most cases, one which has obtained fame from Homer and other poets and writers dear to Virgil. If our own Milton had one favourite bird, the nightingale, whose praises he sings with an iteration as beautiful as the songster's own strains, Virgil's favourite was unquestionably the eagle. But his eagle does not sit tamely by the throne of Jupiter while the queen of heaven caresses its neck; it is essentially a bird of daring and rapine and solitude. Like Tennyson's eagle—

“He clasps the crag with hooked hands,
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ring'd with the azure world he stands;”

or like Shelley's eagle, “soaring and screaming round her empty nest,” she

“Could scale
Heaven, and could nourish in the sun's domain
Her mighty youth with morning;”

or it resembles, in another mood, Mrs. Browning's

“Eagle with both grappling feet still hot
From Zeus's thunder.”

All the power and rush of Virgil's finest verse is spent in picturing the eagle to his hearers, as he must have often seen it sweeping down from the spurs of the Alps round Lago di Garda, and carrying off its hapless victim, swan or marsh-snake, over the wide valley to the distant crests of the Apennines. Perhaps the very vigour and

sublimity of the king of birds endeared it to him who must have been conscious that, however musical and polished were his verses, they seldom soared into the empyrean of poetry.

If the influences of the scenery amidst which his home-life was spent were twofold, so the landscapes and the figures with which he peoples them in his poems partake also of a double character. They are at once natural and conventional; natural so far as they reflected the low-lying pastoral country in the basin of the Po; conventional when coloured with reminiscences of Theocritus, and planted in a Sicilian *entourage*. Besides these characteristics of his verse, it is frequently set with fanciful or "otiose" epithets and animals. Thus lynxes, lions, and lionesses, wild asses, scaly dragons, painted birds, and the like, frequently adorn its flow. Over and above this poetical surplusage, however, the student of Nature will detect much close observation, especially of birds, in Virgil's lines. Like his own Helenus ("Æneid," iii. 361), "he knows the voices of the birds and the omens to be derived from their swift flight," and we shall pause before accusing him in any of his delineations of bird-life as drawing only upon his imagination, or adding merely conventional touches, lest our fancied wisdom should incur the charge of foolish censoriousness which Aulus Gellius brings against one Higinus, who ventured rashly to criticize Virgil's ornithology.¹ Wider reading, and more careful study, will, on the contrary, point out more

¹ Aulus Gell., vi. 6, 5.

beauties in Virgil's ornithological pictures. The exact manner in which he describes, often in a line, the chief characters of a bird, and adds a new delight to its traits by some play of fancy—some lively touch of imagination—becomes very apparent on a survey of his poems. Scientific ornithology, of course, no one would look for in a poet, especially a poet of Virgil's age. Has the "sea-blue bird of March" been ever satisfactorily identified in the Laureate's poetry? Virgil alludes to the migration of birds, for instance, once or twice, but never troubles himself to enunciate a theory upon their departure or return. They bring back spring on their wings, and return to their sweet nests and dear offspring, and that is enough for him. In a similar manner we shall content ourselves with pointing out the nice observation and the poetic mind with which some of the birds of North Italy are described in his verse. The survey will shew how eminently naturalistic is his poetry in the midst of so much that is imitative and conventional.

It may be said generally that the "Eclogues" and "Georgics" exhibit a more genial fancy, and more striking images of bird-life, but that the "Æneid," as befits a work of mature years, is studded with more carefully finished workmanship. That the poet was continually improving, and adding fresh touches to it, is proved by his solicitude concerning the poem at his death, and his wish that it should be burnt after his decease, as not satisfying his own ideal. With these preliminary

remarks, we shall now display to lovers of a poet dear to every cultivated mind, the contents of the Virgilian aviary.

To begin with the birds of the lowland and marsh, our own carrion crow, which so often resorts to the edges of rivers and the seaside for shellfish and mussels, had frequently brought the poet good luck by cawing from some hollow oak on his left; or, wicked thief that it was, called for rain, with full clear voice, as it stalked along singly on the dry sandbanks.¹ This bird possessed a great reputation amongst the Romans for prophetic and thievish powers. From its usual custom of attacking its prey first in the eyes, came a Latin proverb, "To dig out the eyes of crows," answering to ours about catching a weasel asleep. It was celebrated, too, for living long, sharing this fame with the stag, and eagle, and the serpent which could put off years with its skin. Its eyes were used by the profligate as a love-charm to throw dust in the eyes of husbands.² Its larger relative, the raven, was also supposed to have an instinctive knowledge of the approach of fine weather:

"Thus thrice the ravens rend the liquid air,
And croaking notes proclaim the settled fair.
Then, round their airy palaces they fly
To greet the sun, and seized with secret joy,

¹ "Ecl.," ix. 14; "Georg.," i. 388. Cnf. Hor. "Od.," iii. 12:

"Aquæ nisi fallit augur
Annosa cornix."

² Prop., iv. 5, 15.

When storms are over-blown, with food repair
To their forsaken nests and callow care.
Not that I think their breasts with heavenly souls
Inspired, as man, who destiny controls,
But with the changeful temper of the skies,
As rains condense and sunshine ratifies,
So turn the species in their altered minds
Composed by calms and discomposed by winds.
From hence proceeds the birds' harmonious voice,
From hence the crows exult and frisking lambs rejoice."¹

Atmospheric changes connect themselves, in Virgil's mind, with the changed behaviour of birds. So, when wind is impending:

"Back from mid ocean home the cormorants fly
With clamours, and the coots where sands are dry
Resort, while herons love the upper sky."²

Or when rain is imminent:

"Huge flocks of rising rooks forsake their food
And, crying, seek the shelter of the wood.
Besides, the several sorts of watery fowls
That swim the seas or haunt the standing pools,
Then lave their backs with sprinkling dews in vain,
And stem the stream to meet the promised rain."³

Cranes view it blowing up, and descend from their lofty flights to the deep valleys with much noise. And elsewhere he compares the bustle inside a beleaguered city to their screaming:

"Just so 'neath inky clouds
Strymonian cranes scream, cleaving lofty skies
With clamour, 'scaping rain with joyous notes."⁴

The notion comes originally from Aristotle, who says that cranes fly at a great height, in order that they may discern things far off; and if they fore-

¹ Dryden, "Georg.," i. 410.

² *Ibid.*, i. 361.

³ *Ibid.*, i. 381.

⁴ "Georg.," i. 374; "Æn.," x. 264.

see storms and wintry weather, they descend and rest on the ground. Akin to the cranes is the stork, and in spring "the white bird comes which is hated by long snakes."¹ It is indeed difficult for the dweller by Mincius, "clothed in glaucous reeds," to forget the birds of the river—

"Around, above,
Birds of the bank or river-bed in plumes
Of party-coloured splendour soothe the skies
With song, and flit by stream or woodland lawn."²

The wild-goose had probably proved destructive to the poet's crops, for he terms it "improbus anser" (which the late Dr. Sewell quaintly translates "the caitiff goose"), and scoffs at its attempts at singing amongst swans. The wild swan, with its graceful form and not unmusical notes, is, on the contrary, a special favourite with Virgil. Here is a study of wild swans flying home:

"Like a long team of snowy swans on high
Which clap their wings and cleave the liquid sky,
While homeward from their watery pastures borne,
They sing and Asia's lakes their notes return.
Not one who heard their music from afar
Would think these troops an army trained to war,
But flocks of fowl that when the tempests roar
With their hoarse gabbling seek the silent shore."³

Although Dryden was an accomplished fisherman, his rendering of the above lines proves him to have been no ornithologist. He succeeds better in relating the transformation of Cynus into a swan:

"Love was the fault of his famed ancestry,
Whose forms and fortunes in his ensigns fly.

¹ "Georg.," ii. 320.

² "Æn.," vii. 32.

³ Dryden, "Æn.," vii. 699.

For Cycnus loved unhappy Phaeton
And sung his loss in poplar groves alone,
Beneath the sister shades to soothe his grief
Heaven heard his song and hastened his relief;
And changed to snowy plumes his hoary hair,
And winged his flight to chant aloft in air.”¹

More than one of Virgil’s similes of swans attacked by eagles may have been in the mind of Sir E. Landseer, when he painted his picture of this subject, which some fifteen years ago was the ornament of the Royal Academy.

“So, twice six swans in line exulting see,
Whom Jove’s bird swooping from the upper skies
Has scattered, now the band or gains kind earth,
Or looks down on it as though gained.”²

And again:

“As when Jove’s thunderbearer’s crooked claws
Seizing on hare, or swan with whitest breast,
Bears it aloft.”³

And once more:

“Bathed in red evening skies, Jove’s tawny bird
Was hunting shore-birds and the clanging crowd
Of hurrying swans, when sudden downward shot
He smites a goodly swan into the waves
And bears it off, bold thief with crooked legs.”⁴

And he specially speaks of the plain near Mantua:

“Where feed the snow-white swans on grassy slopes.”⁵

Another water-bird is introduced in the “Æneid,” iv. 253, which at first sight, from its splashing dive, might resemble the osprey, of which a few specimens may yet be seen in Ross-shire; but the

¹ Dryden, “Æn.,” x. 189.

² *Ibid.*, i. 392.

³ *Ibid.*, ix. 562.

⁴ *Ibid.*, xii. 247.

⁵ “Georg.,” ii. 199.

word *humilis* probably points to the straight, low-flying advance of a cormorant over the waters. Mercury is depicted as plunging into the sea, just as Homer had sung in the "Odyssey" (v. 57):

"Headlong the god dived quick into the waves,
Like the low-flying bird which round the shores
And round fish-haunted rocks flies near the sea."

The poet had certainly observed with care the haunts of the cormorant, and in another passage accurately draws them ("Æneid," v. 128):

"Far out at sea against the foam-white cliffs
Glooms a dark rock oft smit by swelling waves,
When winter's storm-winds blind the stars ; but raised
In calm-flowing seas above their level tides,
It forms a station much of cormorants loved,
Where grateful sunshine laves them."

Pigeons, again, are birds for which Virgil had a special liking. He speaks of the Chaonian pigeons fluttered at the approach of an eagle. And his Damon says:

"To the dear mistress of my love-sick mind,
Her swain a pretty present has designed ;
I saw two stock-doves billing, and ere long
Will take the nest, and hers shall be the young."¹

And again :

"Stock-doves and turtles tell their amorous pain,
And from the lofty elms of love complain."²

Though the reader of the original scarcely recognises this for the translation of words so true to Nature as, "Not in the meantime shall the wood-pigeons, so dear to thee, hoarse with cooing, and the turtle, cease to moan from their lofty

¹ Dryden, "Ecl.," iii. 69.

² *Ibid.*, i. 58.

elm." Another beautiful image describes Hecuba and her daughters flying to the altars, when Troy was taken, like pigeons flying wildly from the black storm ("Æneid," ii. 516). But perhaps his finest study of the pigeon describes the rock-dove darting from her cave, as we may observe it on our own cliffs at Speeton or Cromarty:

"As, sudden startled from her cave, the dove
Whose dear abode the darkling pumice hides,
Cleaves the air swiftly, flapping through the cave
Till all its roof resounds, but soon, borne on,
Lightly skims o'er the liquid plain, nor moves
Her pinions fleet."¹

This is felicitously true to Nature. Eye and ear are alike satisfied, and it seems to bring the rush of air and roar of waves round the base of the sea-cliffs to the mind as it is read. Another simile relates what too frequently befalls such a bird on its emerging from the cavern's gloom, and is another highly finished picture:

"With equal ease the sacred hawk pursues,
And sweeping upwards from his naked crag,
High o'er a flying cloud strikes down the dove,
Then grips and tears her with his crooked claws
Till gore and feathers float off down the breeze."²

A similar reminiscence strikes the poet as he thinks of Tarchon triumphantly bearing off booty:

"So, high aloft the tawny eagle sweeps,
Bearing away the serpent she has seized,
Wraps her feet round it and drives in her claws.
Wounded but dauntless still the angry snake
Twines his thick folds and bristling with set scales,
Hisses and rears his threat'ning crest; but she
Continues striking with her crooked beak,
O'erwhelms his rage, and wings the sounding air."³

¹ "Æn.," v. 213. ² *Ibid.*, xi. 721. ³ *Ibid.*, xi. 751.

Compare, too, the beautiful lines in "*Æneid*," xi. 721, *seq.*

Among water-birds, Virgil does not dwell much upon the halcyon, though it possessed what we might fancy so attractive a set of myths. In a picture of a summer evening, he makes the shores resound with the halcyon, the brakes with the goldfinch, and tells how, in the beginning of fine weather, the halcyons, beloved by Thetis, spread their wings on the shore to the warm sun" ("*Georg.*," iii. 338; i. 398). He has beautifully touched the sad tale of the nightingale in two passages, relating in the first how Philomela, after serving her dreadful banquet to Tereus, fled to the wilderness on the very wings with which she had fluttered in her misery round home; and in the second, comparing the sad strains of Orpheus, bereft of his wife, to the lorn nightingale, with a happy imitation of the tenderness of the celebrated passage in the "*Odyssey*":

"As the lone bird of song in poplar shades
Bewails her ravished young, which some hard clown
Noting hath drawn, still fledglings, from their nest;
So she weeps night-long, and from some thick bough
Again renews her strain, her strain so sad,
And fills wide silence with her sorrowing plaints."¹

Progne, Philomela's sister, as well from the myth as from being the familiar bird of house and lake, is not forgotten. She is among the birds harmful to bees, "bee-eaters and other birds and Progne" (*i.e.* the chimney-swallow), "marked on her breast by bloody hands" ("*Georg.*," iv. 14).

¹ "*Ecl.*," vi. 80; "*Georg.*," iv. 511.

Again, "with shrill cries she flits around the lakes" (Georg., i. 377), "and hangs, with many a twitter, her nest on the rafters" (*ibid.*, iv. 307). But a still more famous passage occurs in the "Æneid," xii. 473, concerning which Gilbert White writes pleasantly, but as a practised naturalist, in his "Selborne" (ed. Bell, vol. i. 166). After remarking that the ancients were not wont to discriminate between different species as we are, he concludes from many little touches in the picture, that the poet (as in the two instances quoted already), was referring to the chimney-swallow rather than to its, comparatively speaking, more clumsy brother, the martin:

"As when the dusky swallow darts athwart
Some rich man's spacious halls and lofty courts
To catch on nimble wings her tiny prey,
Then bears it speedy to her prattling nest,
And now by empty portico she gleams,
Now twitters by the low-lying marsh."

The woodpecker (*picus*) is happily connected with another myth. Dryden's poetry is, again, better here than his ornithology:

"Circe long had loved the youth in vain,
Till love refused, converted to disdain;
Then, mixing powerful herbs, with magic art
She changed his form who could not change his heart,
Constrained him in a bird and made him fly
With parti-coloured plumes, a chattering pie."¹

The owl is another Virgilian bird. There are at least four species of small owls in Italy; but the poet generalizes them in the few yet telling lines

¹ Dryden, "Æn.," vii. 189.

which he devotes to them. When fine weather is imminent :

“In vain from some high roof the mournful owl,
Watching the sunset, hoots till night grows late ;”
and,

“Lone on the roof with deathful cries the owl
Oft wails, prolonging with sad moans her grief ;”
and once more,

“On tombs at times and ruined gables late,
Wailing to darkness, fits th’ ill-omened bird.”¹

A striking passage in the first “*Georgic*,” 404, is another sign of Virgil’s fondness in his poetry for associating birds with popular myths. It relates to the osprey, or more probably some kind of falcon, pursuing Ciris—another unknown bird. The story of Nifus and his daughter Scylla is told in Ovid, and may be found in the “*Ciris*,” elaborated from Virgil’s own few lines in this passage :

“Towering aloft avenging Nifus flies,
While dared below the guilty Scylla lies.
Wherever frightened Scylla flies away,
Swift Nifus follows and pursues his prey.
Where injured Nifus takes his airy course,
Thence trembling Scylla flies and shuns his force.
This punishment pursues th’ unhappy maid,
And thus the purple hair is dearly paid.”²

It may be worth while to say that the word “dared” in the second line of this translation is a technical term of hawking ; meaning that a bird lies close to the ground in terror at some enemy soaring above it.

¹ “*Georg.*,” i. 403 ; “*Æn.*,” i. 404 ; xii. 862.

² Dryden.

This concludes the list of birds which were dear to Virgil. A few more lines relate to their economy, their use in augury, and the like. Thus a pretty picture gives us the woodman felling ancient trees, and destroying in their fall the time-honoured nests of birds; and another, the lonely thickets enlivened in spring with their song. Occasionally some virulent disease attacks them, and then "the very air is inhospitable, headlong in death they drop from the lofty clouds;" or winter's storm, and the approach of night drifting downwards from the mountains, drives them in thousands to take shelter in their leafy coverts; while at times these troops of birds (perhaps starlings were in Virgil's mind), settle down on the thick plantations, and hoarse flocks of swans, in the noisy swamps of fishy Po, make the sky resound with their cries ("Æneid," xi. 456, etc.). In order to adorn the lowly home of Evander ("Æneid," viii. 456), a touch is added which nearly approaches the poetic feeling of modern times; "the morning songs of early birds beneath his roof-tree" awake him. The fineness of Virgil's genius, the poetic colouring which he gives to all that he touches, are very apparent in these studies of his birds. It is very true, indeed, that most of his similes are drawn from Homer; but how often does he lend them a graceful turn which is wanting in the rough vigour of the original! "Take from Virgil," says Coleridge in the "Table Talk," "his melody and diction, and what is there of him?" A novel and enlarged

method of observing Nature, and the discovery of a new source of adornment for poetry, are at all events features peculiar to him. Modern ornithologists owe to him, as has been shewn, not a little; and all lovers of the country love it the better as they associate its birds of pastoral scenes with the musical verse and clear poetic insight of the great Roman poet.

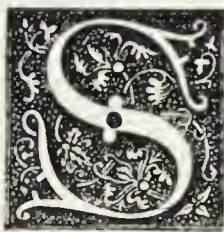




CHAPTER XIII.

ROSES.

“An tu me in viola putabas aut in rosa dicere ?”
(Cic. *Tusc.*, v. 26.)

O ancient and widely prevalent are the notions connected with the word “rose,” that it might well be questioned whether “the rose by any other name would smell as sweet.” The name comes to us, with slight dialectical variations, through Latin and Greek from the Arabic. Not that the East is the exclusive home of the flower, for it is found in almost every country of the Old and New World—from Norway to the North of Africa, and from Kamtschatka to Bengal. There are no roses, however, in South America or Australia; but the greatest beauty and most luxuriant growth of this lovely flower are undoubtedly to be seen in the East.

“Who has not heard of the Vale of Cashmere,
With its roses the brightest that earth ever gave?”

All through the Bengal Presidency roses are magnificent; but their beauty culminates at Umritzur, which is a mass of myrtles and roses, like a city of the "Arabian Nights."¹ Of the many natural varieties, three are mainly the parents of the enormous number of kinds cultivated by modern gardeners, and these three were probably equally well-known to the ancients. These are *Rosa centifolia*, which has been found wild in thickets on the eastern side of the Caucasus; *R. Damascena*, a native of Syria; and *R. Indica*, the Chinese rose. Some 3,000 species are now in cultivation in France, which will give an idea of the varieties which have sprung from budding, grafting, and seed; and Mr. Rivers enthusiastically anticipates, it may be stated for all lovers of the queen of flowers, that "the day will come when all our roses, even moss-roses, will have evergreen foliage, brilliant and fragrant flowers, and the habit of blooming from June till November."² The rose twice mentioned in the Old Testament is no true rose, but most probably the narcissus. Similarly the so-called Rose of Jericho (*Anastatica Hierochuntina*) is a cruciferous plant, found in

¹ Together with Adrianople these two cities make most of the Oriental attar of roses. Umritzur "makes attar of roses from the *R. centifolia*, which only blossoms once a year, and it makes it for the world. Ten tons of rose-petals are used annually in it, and are worth from £20 to £30 per ton in the raw state. The petals are distilled through a hollow bamboo into a vessel which contains sandal-wood oil. The contents are then poured out and allowed to stand till the attar rises to the surface in small globules, and is skimmed off. The pure attar sells for its weight in silver."—"Greater Britain," i., p. 278.

² See Darwin, "Animals and Plants, etc.," vol. i., p. 391.

fandy foil in Egypt and Palestine, just as our own Christmas-rose is really the black hellebore.

The Romans by no means attached to their gardens the sense of a leisurely retreat, full of beautiful flowers and shade, as we do. The Latin word for a garden, *hortus* (which is but a softened form of *χόρτος*), shews that they regarded it mainly as a place for growing food; in short, their garden was orchard, kitchen-garden, and, to a very small extent, flower-garden in one.¹ This economical view of a garden was a natural outgrowth of the practical Roman mind, although it is seen, albeit in a minor degree, in the Greek character as well. Roman gardeners, however, rejoiced in beds of violets and roses as much as we do. Roses were even forced in greenhouses, so that lovers of flowers might have them during winter.²

“Dat festinatas, Cæsar, tibi bruma coronas;
Quondam veris erat nunc tua facta rosa est.”³

“Once, Cæsar, spring was wont thy flow’r to greet;
Now winter’s roses hurry thee to meet.”

Besides ministering to the pleasures of a garden, roses were largely used at Rome for garlands, to

¹ Cnf. Cicero, “Cato Major,” caps. xv., xvi., where with many expressions which speak of the delight in sunshine and shade of the country, the key-note is struck by the words, “Jam hortum ipsi agricolæ succidiam alteram appellant.”

² Compare Cicero, “Cum rosam viderat, tum incipere ver arbitrabatur” (“Verr.,” ii. 5, 10); and the philosopher Seneca’s indignant question, “Non vivunt contra naturam qui hieme concupiscunt rosam?” (Ep. cxxii. 8.)

³ Mart., xiii. 127. See Becker’s “Gallus,” p. 289, ed. 1844.

be worn during the caroufals which followed the chief meal of the day. As early as the second Punic war this festive custom prevailed. There was a notion among the Greeks that the flowers prevented intoxication; but they were chiefly subservient to luxury. Besides roses, violets were also used for garlands, together with the green leaves of the myrtle, ivy, and parsley. It was usual for the host to supply these garlands, much as a modern entertainer places a small nosegay before each of his guests. Everyone will remember the beautiful little ode of Horace, in which he warns his servant against extravagance in the matter of garlands, bidding him refrain from seeking where "the last rose of summer" delays; nor has he written a more tender idyl than that which shews us Pyrrha binding up her golden hair, while some slender youth courts her in a grotto hung with roses.¹ Indeed, the rose has always been the flower most dear to poetry. "Place a hundred handfuls of fragrant herbs and flowers," says the Persian Jami, "before the nightingale, yet he wishes not in his constant heart for more than the sweet breath of his beloved rose." It was a favourite flower of Milton, owing to his classical reading. In Eve's nuptial bower,

"Each beauteous flower,
Iris all hues, roses, and jessamine,
Reared high their flourish'd heads between, and wrought
Mosaic."

¹ It is scarcely necessary to add that Milton has translated this ode of Horace into as dainty English as the original, and in the same metre.

There the first parents,

“Lulled by nightingales, embracing slept,
And on their naked limbs the flowery roof
Shower’d roses which the morn repaired.”

Eve is painted,

“Veiled in a cloud of fragrance, where she stood,
Half spied, so thick the roses blushing round
About her glow’d.”

And when Adam first learns his wife’s transgression :

“From his slack hand the garland wreath’d for Eve
Down dropt, and all the faded roses shed.”¹

Shakespeare’s roses are those which blossomed on the hedges by the Avon, and in the little cottage-plots with which he was most familiar. His “sweet musk-roses” are the wildings of his own country lanes. He has stamped an indelible association on this flower by relating the story of red and white roses becoming the badges of the rival houses of York and Lancaster (“1 Henry VI.,” ii. 4). All who have read the beautiful “Virgin Martyr” of Massinger will remember how felicitously he makes use of the legend which tells that roses were sent down from Paradise to strengthen the martyr’s resolution.

The rose was especially sacred to Venus. She was fabled to have risen from the sea dropping roses over Rhodes, itself named from and famous for that flower.² Another legend told that she

¹ “Par. Lost,” iv. 697, 771, and ix. 425.

² Ovid, “Fast.,” v. 354 :

“Et monet ætatis specie, dum floreat, uti ;
Contemni spinam, cum cecidere rosæ.”

presented a rose to the Egyptian God of Silence, Harpocrates, whence the expression “under the rose.”¹ It was used at Rome on all festive or solemn occasions, and is frequently alluded to by the Roman poets in reference to its beauty and the moral its frailness pointed, as, indeed, the poets of every nation have sung. Thus Horace speaks of the “*nimum breves flores amænæ rosæ* ;” and Martial, when addressing his own book of poems :

“*Hæc hora est tua, cum furit Lyæus.
Cum regnat rosa, cum madent capilli.*”²

The expressions “to lie among roses,” to “drink,” or “live” among them, were synonyms at Rome for luxurious living; and Cicero thus paints the excessive luxury of Verres: “*Lectica octophoro ferebatur, in qua pulvinus erat perlucidus, Meliteni rosa fartus; ipse autem coronam habebat unam in capite, alteram in collo, reticulumque ad nares sibi admovebat tenuissimo lino, minutis maculis, plenum rosæ*” (*Verr.*, ii. 5, 27). “*Rosa*,” or “*mea rosa*,” became, naturally, a term of endearment, just as with us it has become a Christian name. The annual dressing of the graves with flowers, which is so well-known a custom in modern France, sprang from the feast of roses at Rome—the *rosalia*, or *rosales escæ*, when the tombs were adorned in like manner with

¹ Billerbeck, “*Flora Classica*” (Leipzig, 1824), p. 132. “So we condemn not the German custom, which over the table describeth a rose in the ceiling.”—(Sir T. Browne, “*Vulgar Errors*,” v. 22.)

² Martial, x. 19, 19.

garlands of roses. "Cato, in his 'Treatise of Gardens,' ordained as a necessary point that they should be planted and enriched with such herbs as might bring forth flowers for coronets and garlands."¹ Pliny adds, however, that the Romans were acquainted with very few garden flowers for garlands save violets and roses. The *roseta*, or rose-beds, in which these roses were grown, are much celebrated in Latin poetry, particularly those of Pæstum, which still delight the traveller,² and were renowned for blossoming twice in the year.

Pliny is the chief authority for Roman roses. He mentions that twelve varieties of the flower, all more or less esteemed, were known at Rome. Those grown at Præneste and Capua were regarded as the best. A botanical characteristic of the rose family is the possession of five petals. Pliny had noticed this: "The fewest leaves that a rose hath be five; and so upward they grow ever still more and more, untill they come to those that have an hundred, namely about Campain in Italy, and neere to Philippos, a city in Greece, whereupon the rose is called in Latine Centifolia." They have been brought to this size, and to the fragrance which many of them, especially those of Cyrene, possess, he adds, "by many devises and sophistications" of the gardeners. Yet how little he knew practically about rose-cultivation is apparent from his words, "the rose-bush loveth not to be planted

¹ Pliny, "Nat. Hist." (Holland), xxi. 1.

² "Biferi rosaria Pæsti," Virg., "Georg.," iv. 119; Prop., iv. 5, 59; and "punicea roseta," Virg., "Ecl.," v. 17.

in a fat and rich foile, ne yet upon a vein of cley," which is the exact opposite to the recommendations of modern horticulture. Another hint may be commended to the attention of rofarians: "They that desire to have rofes blow betimes in the yeare before their neighbours, use to make a trench round about the root a foot deep, and poure hot-water into it, even at the first, when the bud of the rose beginneth to be knotted."

In speaking of the "wine rofat," or "oile rofat," compounded of rofes, Pliny seems to mean what we call attar of rofes, or rose-water. The best rose-water is at present made at Ghazeepore, and it is used in much the same manner as the Romans employed their "wine rofat," for bathing any fore or inflamed part of the body. But, as usual, Pliny recommends every part of the rose for different ailments. The root of a kind of wild rose (our dog-rose, so named from this superstition), is a soveraign remedy against the bite of a mad dog. "The ashes of rofes, burnt, serve to trim the haire of the eiebrowes. Dried rose-leaves do repress the flux of humours into the eies. The flowre procureth sleepe. To rub the teeth with the seed easeth the toothach. The wild rose-leaves, reduced into a liniment with Beares grease, doth wonderfully make haire to grow again;" these will serve as specimens of the medicinal value of the rose in Roman eyes.¹ In Gerard's "Herbal" will be found two folio pages of the medicinal value of rofes in the estimation of our forefathers.

¹ See "Nat. Hist.," viii. 41 ; xxi. 19.

That the rose came from the East to the Greeks, is testified by the fact of Homer knowing nothing of the rose as a flower. He did, indeed, know of attar of roses, for ("Iliad," xxiii. 186) he makes Aphrodite anoint the corpse of Hector with "oil of roses."¹ In his time, the rose itself had not been imported into Greece. The same fact is evidently alluded to by his constant use of "rosy-fingered" as an epithet of the dawn (which may be compared with our own poet's "God made Himself an awful rose of dawn"), and of Aphrodite herself. Thus the introduction of her worship into Greece has been actually ascribed to the Phœnicians, who, we know, did bring there the planetary worship of the Assyrians. Moreover, "Aphrodite is placed by Homer in relation with the Charites, Eastern personages, whose name corresponds with the Sanscrit Harits, meaning originally 'bright,' and afterwards the horses of the dawn."² It is curious that the rose, save with the lyric poets, does not seem to have been a great favourite. Sophocles prefers the hyacinth. The dramatic poets, concentrating their thoughts on the tragedy of man's feeling and actions, disregarded it as a creature of a wholly different, a lower and a frivolous world. Anacreon naturally celebrates the flower, and does so more than any other Greek singer:

¹ "Poeta rosam non norit, oleum ex rosa norit" (Aul. Gell., xiv. 6, 3). Cnf., too, Pliny, "Nat. Hist.," xxi. 4.

² W. E. Gladstone, "Juventus Mundi," p. 315; and see Max Müller's "Essay on Comparative Mythology." ("Oxford Essays," 1856, p. 81.)

“With roses crowned, on flowers supinely laid,
Anacreon blithe the sprightly lyre essayed.”

Love sleeping among the roses and stung by a bee, or caught by the Muses and bound with wreaths of roses, or the ode on “The Rose,” imitated by Dr. Broome, which begins:

“Come, lyrist, tune thy harp and play
Responsive to my vocal lay;
Gently touch it while I sing
The rose, the glory of the Spring.”

These are samples of the festive ideas connected with roses among the luxurious Asiatic Greeks. The flavour of roses was used to improve cookery, and so there was a Greek conserve, like our marmalade, composed of roses and quinces.

In the Middle Ages, the rose was one of the few flowers which men found leisure to cultivate in England. It would not be often seen on the cottage-wall, as with us at present, but more frequently in the pleasure or even the little garden on one side of the castle, shut in between two of its angles, such as may yet be seen at Stirling. The French writer of the “*Romaunt of the Rose*” would naturally expect it to blossom in the garden which he somewhat profanely, though only after the fashion of his time, describes as:

“There is no place in Paradise
So gode in for to dwell or be,
As in that gardin thoughtin me.”

And the God of Love is attired by him in a garment:

“Ipurtraied and iwrought with floures
By divers medeling of coloures ;
Flouris there were of many gife,
Ifet by compace in a fife.
There lackid no of lure to my dome,
Ne not fo much as floure of brome,
Ne violet, ne eke pewinke,
Ne flowre none that men can on thinke ;
And many a rofe-lefe full long
Was entermedlid there emong ;
And alfo on his hedde was fet
Of rofes redde a chapilet.”¹

A rofary is alfo described—

“Chargid full of rofis
That with an hedge aboute enclosed is.”

There “gretift hepe of rofes be;” and thefe “rofes redde” with their “knoppis,” or birds, are dwelt on by the poet with the pleafure of a true rofe-lover.

But it is in Dante that the moft glorious and devotional ufe of the rofe is found ; a ufe from which comes our expreffion a “rofe-window,” to indicate a large circular cathedral window filled with ftained glafs representing faints and martyrs radiating from the central effulgence of Divine glory. Thus in the “Paradifo,” he writes :

“Lume è laffù, che vifibile face
Lo Creatore a quella creatura,
Che folo in lui vedere ha la fua pace ;

“E fi diftende in circular figura
In tanto, che la fua circonferenza
Sarebbe al Sol troppo larga cintura.

* * * *

“Nel giallo della rofa fempiterna
Che fi dilata, rigrada e redole
Odor di lode al Sol che fempere verna.”

¹ Anderson's Poets, vol. i., pp. 281, 287.

And again, in the next canto:

“ In forma dunque di candida rosa
 Mi si mostrava la milizia santa,
 Che nel suo sangue Cristo fece sposa ;”

while the angel host, like bees humming round a
 rose,

“ Nel gran fior discendeva, che s’adorna
 Di tanti foglie, e quindi risaliva
 Là dove il suo amor sempre soggiorna.

“ Le facce tutte avean di fiamma viva,
 E l’ ale d’ oro, e l’ altro tanto bianco
 Che nulla neve a quel termine arriva.

“ Quando scendean nel fior, di banco in banco
 Porgevan della pace e dell’ ardore,
 Ch’ egli acquistavan ventilando il fianco.

* * * *

“ Chè la luce divina è penetrante
 Per l’ universo, secondo ch’ è degno,
 Si che nulla le puote essere ostante.”¹

Surely no uninspired writer ever penned such words
 of splendid adoration and insight! The vision
 may fitly close with the strain of another great
 thinker:

“ All is beauty,
 And knowing this is love, and love is duty ;
 What further may be fought for or declared ?”²

¹ “ Paradiso,” Canto xxx. 100 ; xxxi. 1-24.

² Browning, “The Guardian Angel.”





CHAPTER XIV.

WOLVES.

THE wolf, as being universally distributed, is so well known that a large body of curious learning has grown up with it. Its tail is straight; which seems to establish a structural difference between it and the numerous varieties of the dog. Yet naturalists, such as the late Mr. Bell, have derived all dogs from the wolf, although Linnæus describes the former animal as “caudâ sinistrorsum recurvatâ.” The Old World wolves are probably not specifically different from those of the New. They are found all over the Continent, and range from Egypt to Lapland. The jackal, a near congener, appears only in Eastern Europe, while a variety known as the black wolf (*C. Lycaon*) is found in the Vosges Mountains, in the Alps, and the Pyrenees. As for the derivation of the word “wolf,” its “suggested connection with Lat. ‘vulpes,’ a fox, is not generally accepted.”¹ The

¹ Skeat, “Dictionary.”

Sanfrit form of the word is "vrika," the "tearer," or "render." In Icelandic it is "úlfr," whence our "wolf;" as "old" has become "wold." With the Northmen, the wolf was sacred to Odin, who was always accompanied by two of these animals, Geri and Freki, which were fed with his own hand. At least two place-names in Lincolnshire, Ulceby and Uffelby, retain traces of the wolf's Norse name;¹ while Wolverton, Woolmer, and the like, shew that the Saxons also left their name for the creature in the local nomenclature of the country.

The wolf was in later historical times the largest wild beast known to the Greeks; although, in the time of Xerxes, lions had fallen upon his baggage animals in Theffaly. It was regarded by them as the type of a bloodthirsty ravening creature, and as such frequently appears in Homer.² Its skin was occasionally worn as a helmet, like the bearskins of our troops. The Thracians, who joined the army of Xerxes, each bore two spears, used for wolf-hunting, as arms. As being strictly a nocturnal animal, most often seen in what was called "wolf-twilight," or grey dawn, the wolf was celebrated with the ancients in witchcraft and superstition. Homer places it together with the lion in the landscape round the abode of Circe. Together with the Romans, it was an article of folk-lore among the Greeks that if a wolf saw a

¹ Streatfeild, "Lincolnshire and the Danes," 1884, p. 72.

² Thus the Greeks and Trojans, mutually inflamed with rage, rush upon each other "like wolves" ("Il.," iv. 471).

person first, that man was struck dumb. So Plato makes Socrates say, when angrily accosted by the sophist Thrasymachus: "I was dismayed and feared as I looked at him; and I verily believe, unless I had seen him first, that I should have been struck dumb."¹ So "to see a wolf," "wolf's wings" (like "pigeon's milk"), and "the wolf marrying the lamb," with others of the same kind, became usual Greek proverbs. Dean Trench justly stigmatizes "one must howl with the wolves" as being the most dastardly of all proverbs. This, however, is not due to Greek imagination.

The Egyptians specially associated the wolf with the world of darkness. It is represented on the painted walls of their catacombs and temples, and was probably connected by the priests with some esoteric doctrine of the transmigration of souls. Wolf mummies are found at Osiot, the ancient Lycopolis.

At Rome, the wolf, suitably to the national character, was held in high honour. This took its rise from the she-wolf which had suckled Romulus and Remus. Lupa, as Livy terms her, was the wife of Faustulus, the royal herdsman; but she was

¹ "De Rep.," 336 d. Cnf. Virgil,

"Mærin lupi videre priores."

("Ecl.," ix. 54, and Theoc. xiv. 22.) "The ground or occasional original hereof was probably the amazement and sudden silence the unexpected appearance of wolves do often put upon travellers. But thus could not the mouths of worthy martyrs be silenced, who being exposed not only unto the eyes, but the merciless teeth of wolves, gave loud expressions of their faith, and their holy clamours were heard as high as heaven."—(Sir T. Browne, "Vulgar Errors," iii. 8.)

soon deified under the title of Luperca, while the Lycean Pan's festival (so called because he kept off wolves) was entitled Lupercalia, and was one of the most popular of the old Roman festivities. From the story connected with the birth of the founder of the city, the wolf was deemed sacred to Mars. A cluster of Roman proverbs attached itself to this animal. "Lupus in sermone" was applied to any sudden appearance of the person who was being spoken of at the time. "To have a wolf by the ears," meant to be in a situation of great difficulty, from which advance or retreat was dangerous. "To snatch the lamb from the wolf," "to set the wolf over the flock," and the like, are samples of these proverbs. The representation of the wolf, sometimes with, sometimes without the twin children, was a favourite device on Roman coins. It appears also on one of Ilerda. Art and poetry drew Romulus as rejoicing

"Lupæ fulvo nutricis tegmine."

Among the magnificent imagery of the shield worked by Vulcan and given by Venus to Æneas, we may be sure that these infant glories of the State were not forgotten :

"Fecerat et viridi foetam Mavortis in antro
Procubuisse lupam ; geminos huic ubera circum,
Ludere pendentes pueros, et lambere matrem
Impavidos ; illam tereti cervice reflexam
Mulcere alternos et corpora fingere lingua."¹

Dryden has caught much of the beauty of these lines :

¹ "Æn.," viii. 630.

“Here in a verdant cave’s embowering shade,
The fostering wolf and martial twins were laid ;
Th’ indulgent mother, half reclined along,
Looked fondly back, and formed them with her tongue,
While at her breast the sportive infants hung.”

Ornytus is also pictured by Virgil as wearing a wolf-skin head-dress:

“Caput ingens oris hiatus
Et malæ texere lupi cum dentibus albis.”¹

Aristotle evidently knew a good deal about the habits of the wolf. It produces blind puppies like a dog, he says. A pleasant fable has attached itself to wolves, that they all produce young in a certain twelve days of the year, because in so many days they once conducted Latona from the Hyperboreans to Delos, she having changed herself into the form of a she-wolf from fear of Juno. This statement, however, he adds, seems to be as mythical as the story that they only bear young once in their lives. They always live on flesh, except when ailing, and then, like dogs, they eat grass. Those which lead a solitary life are more ready to eat men than those which hunt in packs. In excessive hunger they will stoop to eat earth. Clearly Aristotle had sifted much of the popular knowledge, as was his wont; but it is not surprising that he states more of wolves than experience warranted.²

Pliny, on the contrary, although he lived so much later, was an eager listener to all old women’s tales. The fat of wolves was esteemed,

¹ “Æn.,” xi. 680.

² “De Nat. Animal.,” vi. 29 ; viii. 7.

he writes, above all. "New-wedded wives were wont upon their marriage-day to anoint the side-posts of their husbands therewith at their first entrance, to the end that no charms, witchcrafts, and forceries might haue power to enter in." Again: "The muffle or snout of a wolfe, kept long dried, is a counter-charm against all witchcraft and forcery; which is the reason that they usually set it upon gates of countrey farms. The same force the very skin is thought to haue which is flaid whole of itself, without any flesh, from the nape of the neck. And, in truth, ouer and aboue the properties which I haue reported already of this beast, of such power and vertue it is, that if horses chance to tread in the tracts of a wolfe, their feet will be immediately benumbed and astonied. Also their lard is a remedy for those who are empoisoned by drinking quicksiluer." Some parts of the animal he prescribes to be mixed with Attic honey, as this is "singular for those whose sight is dim and troubled." Likewise certain bones are found in wolves "which, if they be hanged about the arme, do cure the collicke." But his credulity was not yet fated. "To come unto leechcraft belonging unto beasts, it is said that wolves wil not come into any lordship or territory, if one of them be taken, and when the legs are broken, be let bloud with a knife by little and little, so as the same may be shed about the limits or bounds of the said field, as he is drawne along, and then the body be buried in the very place where they began first to dragge

him. Others take the plough-share from the plough wherewith the first furrow was made that yeare in the field, and put it upon the fire burning vpon the common hearth of the house, and there let it lie untill it be quite consumed; and look how long this is in doing, so long shal the wolfe do no harm to any liuing creature within that territorie or lordship.”¹

Shakespeare, who has remembered to add “the tooth of wolf” to the hell-broth of his witches’ caldron, had good reason for the selection, as this animal enjoyed an unenviable reputation in witchcraft. By the wondrous herbs of Pontus, the lover in Virgil was enabled to see Mœris turn into a wolf, and hide in the woods and call forth ghosts from their sepulchres,² that is, become a werewolf. This is the first mention in Latin literature of the *versipellis* or turnskin, but it ran through the magical authors. In Greece the superstition was well known; certain Scythians near the Black Sea passed for wizards, because once a year they became wolves for a few days, and then returned to their true form. The old Northmen fancied that by wearing coats of wolf-skin, men could become wolves at pleasure. Indeed, the superstition has spread widely, and is at present largely believed among the Northern nations. In Germany the change is now effected by unclasping or cutting a girdle made of the skin of a man who has been hanged, and fastened by a buckle having seven

¹ Pliny, “Nat. Hist.” (Holland), xxviii. 9, 10; xiv. 20.

² “Ecl.,” viii. 97.

tongues. Trials of alleged were-wolves (*loup-garous*) were as numerous in France, during the sixteenth century, as were trials for witchcraft in Scotland. There are many traces of the belief in Russian folk-lore, and the wolf in the story of "Little Red Riding Hood" was probably a were-wolf.¹

Before the age of Jupiter, wild beasts and serpents were innocuous, said the Latin poet:

"Ille malum virus serpentibus addidit atris,
Prædarique lupos jussit."

And in his picture of pestilence devastating a country, with much skill he introduces the wolf:

"Non lupus infidias explorat ovilia circum,
Nec gregibus nocturnus inambulat ; acrior illum
Cura domat."

A still more beautiful comparison represents the wolf as endowed with conscience, and, mindful of his offences against man, flinking off into the wilds.²

"Velut ille, prius quam tela inimica sequantur,
Continuo in montes sese avius abdidit altos,
Occiso pastore, lupus, magnove juvenco,
Conscius audacis facti, caudamque remulcens
Subjecit pavitantem utero, silvasque petivit."

And the horror of the portents attending Cæsar's death is intensified by the howling of wolves:

"Et altæ
Per noctem resonare lupis ululantibus urbes."³

¹ See a good chapter on this curious superstition in Kelly's "Curiosities of Indo-European Tradition and Folk-lore;" cap. ix. (1863).

² "Georg.," iii. 537 ; i. 130 ; "Æn.," xi. 809.

³ "Georg.," i. 486.

In fact, the wolf was an animal suited to Virgil's poetry, and kept in store by him, ready for any imaginative emergency. So when Turnus has to be represented raging against the foe, he is compared to a wolf. Dryden by no means enters into the full beauty of the passage, which should be read in the original:

“So roams the mighty wolf about the fold,
Wet with descending showers and stiff with cold ;
He howls for hunger and he grins for pain,
His gnashing teeth are exercised in vain ;
And, impotent of anger, finds no way
In his distended paws to grasp the prey.
The mothers listen ; but the bleating lambs
Securely swig the breast beneath the dams.”¹

After his ordinary fashion, Ælian adds to the marvels of Pliny respecting the wolf. It cannot bend its head back, he asserts ; but must look straight forwards. If it should happen to tread on a flower of the squill, it is at once rendered torpid ; so foxes take care to strew squills in the dens of wolves.² This animal has left its traces in our botanical names. The lycopodium is so called from its resemblance to the dark circular cushion under the wolf's foot, while its upper surface was seen by the fanciful in the lycopus, or gipsy-wort. The gaping mouth of the wolf has left its popular impression in the lycopis or buglofs (wolf's-face).

Wolves go back to a great antiquity, for their bones have been found in the fossil cave of Aurignac in France, in Kent's Hole, and elsewhere ; while

¹ “Æn.,” ix. 59.

² “De Nat. An.,” x. 26.

they are said to have been seen, so lately as Elizabeth's reign, in Dartmoor and Dean Forest. An amusing writer, who travelled through Sutherlandshire in 1650, says: "Specially here never lack wolves more than are expedient." For the history of the wolf in England, the reader may be referred to Harting's "*Extinct British Animals*," where much information on them is collected. He decides that the animal became extinct in England sometime in the reign of Henry VII. In Scotland, wolves lingered until the end of the seventeenth century, the last being killed in 1743; while the last was killed in Ireland in 1770, at all events after 1766.¹ An old belief averred that wolves could not live in England.

If proverbial lore, witchcraft, and superstitions of many kinds claim the wolf as a useful animal, the fabulist would be put to fore straits were he deprived of its assistance. Æsop and his imitators generally draw the wolf as the impersonation of tyrannical greed; as in the fable of "*The Wolf and the Lamb*." Occasionally it is used to teach mankind a moral lesson, as in that of the boy who called "*Wolf! wolf!*" when there was no wolf, and was finally torn in pieces for his deceit. Once, however, the better part of the wolf—its wild and free nature—is deservedly recognised in the fable of "*The Wolf and Dog*," when the latter tries to cajole the starving wolf to give up its freedom:

"Be complaisant, obliging, kind,
And leave the wolf for once behind."

¹ "*Extinct Brit. Animals*," p. 204.

But on the wolf unluckily seeing the collar round
his friend's neck, then,—

“He starts and without more ado,
He bids the abject wretch adieu.
‘Enjoy your dainties, friend ; to me
The noblest feast is liberty.
The famished wolf upon these desert plains,
Is happier than a fawning cur in chains.’”

Vanière, the Jesuit, in his “*Prædium Rusticum*”
(lib. xvi.), describes in poetic language the capture
of wolves in pitfalls, and then names a curious
method of capturing them, viz., by the use of fish-
hooks :

“Mira frande lupum capies, piscaria celans.
Æra cibus ; carnes et inextricabile ferrum
Hauserit ubi, vis nulla potest exsolvere rubras,
Non ovium jam cæde suo sed sanguine fauces.”

After his fashion, Goffon (1579), in order to help
the Lord Mayor of London “to sette his hand to
thrust out abuses,” drags in a similitude from wolves
which he must have found in some old author, but
which has escaped us : “The Thracians, when they
must passe over frozen streames, sende out theyr
Wolues, which laying theyr eares to the yfe [ice],
listen for noyse. If they hear any thing, they gather
that it mooues ; if it mooue, it is not congealed.
If it be not congealed, it must be liquide. If it
be liquide, then will it yeelde ; and if it yeelde,
it is not good trusting it with the weight of their
bodyes, lest they sincke. The world is so slippery
that you are often inforced to pass over yfe.
Therefore I humbly beseech you to try farther

and trust lesse: not your Wolues, but many of your Citizens haue already sifted the daunger of your passage, and in sifting beene swallowed to their discredite.”¹

¹ Stephen Gosson’s “Schoole of Abuse” (ed. Arber), p. 56.





CHAPTER XV.

ANCIENT FISH-LORE.

“Vera vulgi opinio, quidquid nascatur in parte naturæ ulla, et in mare esse, præterque multa quæ nusquam alibi.”—(PLINY, *Nat. Hist.*, ix. 1.)



N no department of natural history is the ignorance and credulity of ancient writers so noticeable as in their account of fish. Our own popular misconceptions with regard to the habits and economy of fish may well induce us to view with indulgence the short-comings of ancient naturalists; and the Fisheries Exhibition of 1883 seems to have effected but little improvement in this respect. The knowledge of the people with regard to fish, however, has increased wonderfully between the reign of Henry VII. and our own days; in the case of ancient scientific writers—using the word “scientific” of the best knowledge of the time—not only does the knowledge of fishes and their economy appear not to have improved at all in the four hundred years which intervened between

Aristotle and the elder Pliny, but it has absolutely retrograded. Pliny believes more fables, and recounts with grave face more marvels than did the elder natural historian, while he is not nearly so discriminating, and does not exhibit the same common-sense as did his forerunner. The vastness of his own compilations, and his perpetual industry in noting any circumstances of interest connected with natural history, smothered his judgment. He had neither time to sift facts nor to weigh the authority to be attached to statements of other authors; and these defects leave his great "Natural History" a *rudis indigestaque moles*, which compares unfavourably with the more exact and painstaking work of Aristotle. He, on the contrary, must have studied fish practically, so far as actual study of natural history was possible in the judgment of his time, and betrays no small acquaintance with the classification of fish, and the differences which mark them off from quadrupeds and birds. Thus he divides them into fish which produce young by eggs, like ordinary fish, or fish which produce their young alive—fish which we now know to resemble quadrupeds in possessing warm blood, such as whales, dolphins, τὰ σελάχη, and the like. On their generation he was very well informed. Pliny, on the contrary, in addition to the statements of previous writers and of his own coadjutors, might have never seen a fish save such as appeared at his table. The migrations of fish, whereby the most useful families are brought at certain seasons annually to our shores—tunnies,

mackerel, and the like—had been investigated by the Greek philosopher. He had also learnt that this united movement of certain kinds of fish (οἱ χυτοὶ, as he terms them; “fish that swim in companies”) was preliminary to their spawning near the coasts in shallow water,¹ although his reasons for these migrations might furnish a logician with instances of the fallacy, *Non causa pro causa*. “Now of fishes,” he remarks, “some migrate to the land from the sea, and to the sea again from the land, in order to avoid the extremes of heat and cold. Those which are taken near the shore are better than oceanic fishes, for they have more, and better, sustenance; as wherever the sun strikes it produces more numerous, and better, and more tender creatures, just as may be seen in garden produce.”² Possessing a wide knowledge, too, of the different modes of generation among fish, even he is not superior to many prejudices, and to the influence of much which would now be termed folk-lore. “Some fish are sprung from mud and sand, even among such families as generate in the ordinary manner with eggs. This happens in marshes and such places, just as is said once to have happened at Cnidus. There the water was dried up by the dog-days, and all the mud taken out; but the water began to teem with life as soon as the first showers fell, and in this place little fish were generated as the water began to rise.” This is still a vulgar belief. Another,

¹ Aristot., “De Nat. Anim.,” v. 9.

² *Ibid.*, viii. 15.

which resembles the popular stories of showers of frogs or fish, is alluded to in the following words on the fish called *aphye*: "They are produced in shady and marshy places when, after a period of fine weather, the earth has taken in much warmth, as is the case about Salamis and Marathon. In such places, then, the *apbrus* is produced in sunny weather. In some places also it is born, whenever much rain has fallen from the sky, in the foam (*apbrus*) which floats on the surface of the rain-water; and sometimes," he goes on to state, "it springs from the foam on the surface of the sea." Here, probably, for the sake of etymology, he identifies the *aphye* (ἀφύω) and the *apbrus* (foam). Endless fables are told about the generation of eels at the present day. They find their prototype in the first natural historian. This kind of fish, too, he says, is not born from eggs or the ordinary generation of fishes; and it is clear that this is so from the fact that, when marshes have been drained and the mud suffered to harden, eels have appeared with the first shower; "but in droughts and lakes always full of water they are not generated, for they both live and are sprung from the water of showers." Nor do they spring from worms, as some think, "but from what are called the vitals of the earth, which of their own accord acquire consistency in the mud and damp ground." And they are generated wherever there may be putrefaction in the sea and rivers—in the sea where the seaweed is thick, and round the edges of lakes and rivers, for there the heat prevails most to

cause putrefaction.¹ A moment's reflection shews how similar are the beliefs of labourers, and even of many in higher stations at the present day.

A question has often been raised whether fishes sleep. Aristotle has no hesitation in answering it in the affirmative. They do not, indeed, close their eyes; but their motionless state, saving the slow movement of the tail, proves it. In this sleep he knew that they could be taken out by the hand or struck with a stick. The tunny-catchers, too, while the tunnies are asleep, are enabled to throw their nets around them. "The dolphin and whale, and such as have an air-passage, sleep on the sea with their air-passage projecting through which they breathe, gently moving their fins; ere now some have heard a dolphin snoring."² To some such fable Milton alludes in his grand lines:

"that sea-beast
Leviathan, which God of all His works
Created hugest that swim the ocean stream ;
Him, haply, flumb'ring on the Norway foam,
The pilot of some small night-founder'd skiff
Deeming some island, oft, as seamen tell,
With fixed anchor in his scaly rind,
Moors by his side under the lee, while night
Invests the sea, and wished morn delays."³

Among the singular fish which Aristotle knows and describes may be named the angler, or fisher-frog (*lophius piscatorius*), and the electric ray (*raia torpedo*). The habits of life of these are detailed, just as modern science knows them: the first, with the tempting baits at the end of the long

¹ Aristot., "De An. Hist.," vi. 14, 15.

² *Ibid.*, iv. 10.

³ "Par. Lost," i. 200.

line-like processes on its head, while itself lies concealed in the sand; the second, with its powerful natural battery, by which it stuns fish before it seizes them. He also mentions that it has the power to benumb men, as our modern fishermen sometimes find to their cost.¹ The anthias, when taken, endeavours to saw the line off on the rocks, just as salmon do, when hooked in a Scotch stream, with ledges of slate. The scolopendra has an easy mode of escaping the hook. When it has swallowed one it turns inside out, and, so having rejected the hook, turns back again. The fox-fish has another device: it chooses the line above the hook for attack, bites it through, and so escapes; but night-lines set with many hooks prove fatal to this fish. Of the *glanis*, as he calls it—that is the *silurus*—Aristotle tells a story which has actually been proved true in the case of the common male English stickleback (*gasterosteus trachurus*), which thus acts as guard to its nest, and will not allow a female to approach the eggs.² “Of river fishes, the male glanis takes great care of its young. The female, having brought them into existence, departs; but the male, noting where most of the spawn adheres, acts as guardian of the eggs, and continues to do so, warding off the other little fish lest they should destroy the brood. And this it does for forty or fifty days, until the brood has grown and is able to escape

¹ For the statements contained in this section see a curious chapter (ix. 25).

² See Yarrell, “Hist. of British Fishes,” ii., p. 77.

from other fish. This circumstance is known by the fishers from the fact of the fish moaning and uttering a roar when it keeps off intruders." With the exception of this latter marvel, the procedure of the glanis is precisely that of the stickleback. Although Aristotle has mistaken the fish, the observation is acute, and shews how much the philosopher was in advance of his age. The habits of the sepia, in discharging its ink, were also familiar to him. A paragraph respecting the poulpe will shew the singular manner in which fact and fable are mingled with the statements of even the best of ancient naturalists: "Now the polypus is a foolish creature, for it will come to a man's hand if he puts it into the water; yet it is a creature of some contrivance, for it collects all its prey into the den where it lives, and, when it has consumed the most useful parts, it casts out the shells and fragments of the crabs and sea-snails and the spines of the little fish, and chafes the fish which then come together to them, changing its colour, and adapting itself in hue as much as possible to the stones around. It adopts the same device when terrified." He is somewhat narrow in his views in a succeeding sentence: "Among fish, the *rhine*" (seemingly a kind of shark) "is the only one to change colour like the polypus." This is probably a common device with most fish, and is well known to be the case with trout. In Mr. St. John's "Natural History and Wild Sports of Moray," some singular instances are related of this

power in trout to assimilate their colour to their surroundings.

If Aristotle contains many facts with not a few fables, Pliny's "Natural History of Fish" consists of many fables with but few facts. He is omnivorous and indiscriminating; like his own Silurus, "a great devourer, and maketh foule work, for no living creatures come amisse unto him; he setteth up all indifferently." Marvels of every kind are dear to him, such as the Indian fishes, like eels, sixty cubits long, and so strong that when elephants come to the river to drink, they catch their trunks with their teeth, and "mauger their hearts, force them downe under the water." A few more specimens of his curiously blended facts and fancies may be given. All fish suffer much from cold, "but those especially who are thought to have a stone in their head, as the pikes, the chromes, scienæ and pagri." Again, "The Arcadians make wonderous great account of their exocœtus, so called for that hee goeth abroad and taketh up his lodging on the dry land to sleep." Aristotle was inclined to be credulous when treating of eels. Listen to Pliny: "Yeeles live 8 yeares. And if the North wind blow they abide alive without water 6 daies, but not so long in a Southern wind. Of all fish, they alone if they lie dead, flote not above the water." The whole life-history of the eel is still such an enigma that readers must be cautious how they smile at Pliny's stories. Take the following for instance: "There is a Lake in Italy called Benacus,

through which the river Mincius runs; at the issue whereof everie yere about the moneth of October, when the Autumne, star Arcturus, whereby the lake is troubled as it were with a winter storme and tempest, a man shall see rolling amongst the waves a wonderfull number of these Yeels wound and tangled one within another; in-
somuch as in the leapweeles and weernets devised for the nonce to catch them in this river, there be found sometime a thousand of them wrapped together in one ball." After the merriment which such a story is liable to excite has abated, it is worth while turning to a book just published by a fisherman who has carefully studied the habits of eels in the Broads of Norfolk. "A very curious phenomenon," he says, "is sometimes observable in the upper waters of the Yare and Waveney: the eels come down in large solid balls from one to two feet in diameter, heads inside and tails out; and these living balls roll down the river, and plump into the nets with such force as to carry them away, for which reason the eel-fishers at the mills dread their coming. We cannot even guess at the cause of this singular eel-freak."¹

The Echeneis, of course, is fabled by Pliny to stay ships; "for that cause also it hath but a bad name in matters of love, for inchanting as it were both men and women. Moreover, it hath this vertue, being kept in salt, to draw up gold that is fallen into a pit or well, being never so deep, if it is

¹ "The Broads of Norfolk," p. 216. Blackwood, 1883. By G. C. Davies.

let down and come to touch it." Victor Hugo has thrilled numberless readers with his account of the huge poulpe that attacked a man, and many stories, fabulous and otherwise, have in recent years been seen in print about the size and fierceness of poulpes and calamaries. Pliny gives a marvellous account of the killing of such a monster, "whose head was as big as a good round hoghead or barrel that would take and contain 15 amphores." His words implicitly contain all the fabulous as well as the true recitals concerning these monsters which have appeared of late years. Much of Pliny's "History" is a translation from Aristotle, with many fables and scraps of Italian folk-lore appended. We must own to ignorance of the *aries* or ram-fish, which must possess what our forefathers would have termed "a shrewd nature," for it is "a very strong thief at sea, and makes foule work where he comes; for one while he squats close vnder the shade of big ships that ride at anker in the bay, where he lies in ambush to wait when any man for his pleasure would swim and bath himself, that so he might surprise them: otherwhiles he puts out his nose above the water to spie any small fisher boats comming, and then he swimmeth close to them, overturneth and sinketh them." His teaching on the generation of fishes is marked with vague credulity. His anthias, too, cuts the line afunder with the sharp, saw-like fins which it bears on its back, while the sargons fret it in two against a sharp rock. His last chapter on fish is delightful,

and has been the source of many of the fabulous tales of later ages. Some fish are friendly, he tells, others hateful to each other: "The Mullet and the sea-Pike hate one another, and be ever at deadly war; likewise the Congre and the Lamprey; in-somuch as they gnaw off one another's taile. The Lobster is so afraid of the Polype, or Pourcuttell, that if he spie him neere, he evermore dieth for very woe. The Lobsters are ready to scratch and teare the Congre; the Congres, again, do as much for the Polype. On the other side there be examples of friendship among fishes besides those of whose society and fellowship I have already written, and namely between the great whale *Balæna* and the little *Musculus*. For whereas the whale aforefaid hath no use of his eies (by reason of the heavy weight of his eie-browes that cover them), the other swimmeth before him, serveth him instead of eies and lights, to show when he is neere the shelves and shallows, wherein he may be soon grounded, so big and huge he is." This story has greatly taken the fancy of many old English writers, and it is evidently capable of being largely moralized. For example: "The ancients give for an Hierogliph of a wise Senate and able Counsell a little fish going before the great whale, discovering shallows and other dangers, and shewing the way by the motion of itself. This living, the whale is safe, but being dead, he knoweth not what to do."¹

¹ "Sion's Plea against the Prelacy." See, too, S. Goffon's "Schoole of Abuse" (ed. Arber), p. 55. The above citations

The many curiosities of fish-life are often dwelt upon by mediæval and later writers. They also fancied that analogues of all things living on earth were to be found in the sea. Thus Walton writes of the wonders which the Tradescants collected into their museum. This yet exists under the name of their friend Ashmole, at Oxford: "You may there see the Hog-fish, the Dog-fish, the Dolphin, the Cony-fish, the Parrot-fish, the Shark, the Poison-fish," and others. And we will follow his example in "sweetening this discourse out of a contemplation in divine Du Bartas," after duly cautioning readers that this poet's works, translated into English by Sylvester, form 670 folio pages of the most extreme dulness imaginable:¹

"God quickened in the sea and in the rivers
 So many fishes of so many features,
 That in the waters we may see all creatures
 Even all that on the Earth are to be found,
 As if the world were in deep waters drowned.
 For Seas—as well as Skies—have Sun, Moon, Stars ;
 As well as Air—Swallows, Rooks, and Stares ;
 As well as Earth—Vines, Roses, Nettles, Melons,
 Mushrooms, Pinks, Gilliflowers and many millions
 Of other plants, more rare, more strange than these
 As very fishes, living in the seas ;
 As also Rams, Calves, Horses, Hares and Hogs,
 Wolves, Urchins, Lions, Elephants and Dogs,
 Yea, Men and Maids," etc., etc.

Walton proceeds to enumerate, from Ælian and

from Pliny belong to "Nat. Hist.," ix. 15, 16, 19, 21, 22, 25, 30, 44, 50, 51, 59, 62 (Holland's Translation).

¹ "Du Bartas, His divine Weekes and Workes, with a Compleate Collection of all the other most delightfull Workes, translated and written by y't famous Philomusus Josuah Sylvester, Gent." London, 1641.

Oppian, in whom any number of similar marvels may be found, some of the most curious similarities between sea and land creatures, the hermit, Adonis, and the like. The latter fish finds much favour in his eyes, "because it is a loving and innocent fish, a fish that hurts nothing that hath life, and is at peace with all the numerous inhabitants of that vast watery element; and truly, I think, *most Anglers are so disposed to most of mankind.*"¹

Spenser, who swept everything into his verse, was not unmindful of the resources of piscine monsters offered him by the sea. They may amuse fishermen, when, as his own Colin says:

"Sad winter welked hath the day,
And Phœbus, wearie of his yearlie taske,
Yftabled hath his steedes in lowly lay,
And taken up his ynne in Fishes hafke."²

And for his unknown piscine terrors, they are not even surpassed by the monsters of the deep which Schiller makes his Diver see in the perilous plunge for the goblet. In truth, it is a gruesome catalogue:

"Eftsoones they saw an hideous hoast arrayd
Of huge sea-monsters, such as living fence dismayd.
"Most ugly shapes and horrible aspects,
Such as dame Nature selfe mote feare to see,
Or shame, that ever should so fowle defects
From her most cunning hand escaped bee;
All dreadful portraicts of deformitee:
Spring-headed hydres; and sea-shouldring whales,
Great whirlpooles, which all fishes make to flee;
Bright scolopendraes armd with silver scales;
Mighty monoceros with immeasured tayles;

¹ See "Compleat Angler," part i.

² "The Shepheard's Calender," November.

“The dreadful fish, that hath deserv'd the name
 Of Death, and like him lookes in dreadful hew ;
 The griesly wasserman, that makes his game
 The flying ships with swiftnes to pursue ;
 The horrible sea-satyre, that doth shew
 His fearefull face in time of greatest storme ;
 Huge ziffius, whom mariners eschew
 No lesse than rockes, as trauellers informe ;
 And greedy rosmarines with visages deforme :

“All these and thousand thousands many more,
 And more deformed monsters thousand fold
 With dreadfull noise and hollow rombling rore
 Came rushing, in the fomy waues enrolld.”

Soon afterwards Spenser's travellers see the five Sirens, as if he was determined that the sea should hold wonders enough. These were once “faire Ladies,” but now

“Depriv'd
 Of their proud beautie, and th' one moyity
 Transform'd to fish for their bold surquetry ;
 But th' upper halfe their hew retained still,
 And their sweet skill in wonted melody.”

The last line, however, is worthy for its sweetness to compare with anything which even Milton wrote on music.¹

From fabulous to the fish of everyday-life is an easy step. Another poet of the Elizabethan period shall sum up the store of fish with which Nature, niggardly in bestowing other charms, has enriched Lincolnshire. The German Ocean was even in his time recognised as the Mother of Wealth :

“What fish can any shore or British sea-town shew
 That's eatable to us, that it doth not bestow

¹ Spenser, “Faerie Queene,” bk. ii. xii. 23, 31.

Abundantly thereon? The herring, king of sea,
The faster-feeding cod, the mackerel brought by May,
The dainty sole and plaice, the dab, as of their blood;
The conger finely foused, hot summer's coolest food;
The whiting known to all, a general wholesome dish,
The gurnet, rochet, mayd and mullet, dainty fish;
The haddock, turbet, berb, fish nourishing and strong;
The thornback and the skate, provocative among;
The weaver, which although his prickles venom be,
By fishers cut away, which buyers seldom see,
Yet for the fish he bears 'tis not accounted bad;
The sea-flounder is here as common as the shad,
The sturgeon, cut to keggs (too big to handle whole),
Gives many a dainty bit out of his lusty jole."

And much more to the same import, often prosaic enough, and a warning to poets who commit themselves to enumerations of natural objects. We will conclude with one more curious superstition about the osprey. Drayton's lines prove that the bird was sufficiently common in Lincolnshire in his time; though, alas! it has now been long extinct, and the few that do cross the county on migration meet with the usual fate of all rare birds, being at once shot and "set up" in glass cases, lasting emblems of the selfish and wanton cruelty of their captors:

"The ospray oft here seen, though seldom here it breeds,
Which over them the fish no sooner do espie,
But (betwixt him and them by an antipathy)
Turning their bellies up, as though their death they saw,
They at his pleasure lie to stuff his glutt'nous maw."¹

¹ Drayton's "Polyolbion," Song 25.

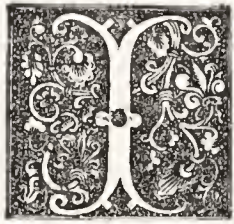




CHAPTER XVI.

MYTHICAL ANIMALS.

“Libri Græci miraculorum fabularumque pleni ; res inauditæ, incredulæ ; scriptores veteres non parvæ auctoritatis.”—(AUL. GELLIUS.)



IN Greek and Roman literature, particularly in the earlier authors, many mythical beings are found, just as in the primitive history of almost all nations. Sometimes the philosophical reason for a belief in these mythical creatures is evident after a little consideration. Thus the numerous worms or serpents—many of which have left their trail on local names, and many more in the traditional folk-lore of England—are undoubtedly due to the old Norse reverence for these creatures ; perhaps because, in the Scandinavian cosmogony, the earth was girdled by a monstrous serpent called Jörmungandr. Again, the numerous and fantastically-sized sacred fish of the Buddhists are referable to these devotees' fondness for fish ; while the mythically-shaped creatures, peacocks, elephants, and

the like, common in Oriental art, are but exaggerations of forms familiar to Eastern tribes from their infancy. In classical literature, the genius of the two nations delighted to exercise itself in the production of grotesque monsters, which fancy frequently invested with striking attributes; and the poets, embalming these conceptions in their verse, handed them on to numerous generations of writers and students of ancient Greece and Rome. Wordsworth has well pointed out that the natural features of Greece, when passed through the alembic of poetic fancy, at once resulted in many a beautiful, many a monstrous brood of supernatural creations:

“The Zephyrs fanning, as they passed, their wings,
Lacked not for love fair objects whom they wooed
With gentle whisper. Withered boughs grotesque,
Stripped of their leaves and twigs by hoary age,
From depth of shaggy covert peeping forth
In the low vale, or on steep mountain-side;
And, sometimes, intermixed with stirring horns
Of the live deer, or goat’s depending beard,—
These were the lurking Satyrs, a wild brood
Of gamesome deities; or Pan himself,
The simple shepherd’s awe-inspiring god.”¹

Besides the richness of native fancy, a large infusion of Oriental beliefs coloured Greek mythology. It is exceedingly difficult to estimate the amount and value of these importations. Save in the “*Odyssæy*,” Homer is comparatively free from them. There he seems intentionally to have dowered his verse with much of the richness and many of the fantastic characteristics of the East.

¹ See “*The Excursion*,” pp. 134-139.

Phœnician failors and merchants brought into Greece a stock of marvels which they may have gathered from such story-tellers as may yet be heard in Bagdad, and read of in the pages of the "Arabian Nights." Many of the shipwrecks of Odysseus, the marvels of Circe's island, the prodigies visible to the hero in the Necyia, are of a distinctly Eastern dye. The Orontes did not flow alone into the Tiber; and tales of travellers, always acceptable to stay-at-home folk, came with a natural fitness from the fertile lands of the East to the Western World. How greatly the Greeks were indebted to the Egyptians for much of their system of divinities, and especially for so many of their conceptions of the future state, may be seen in Herodotus. The fables of Charon and his obole, of Cerberus, of the stern Rhadamanthus, and the like, are specimens of this mythology of Hades. The worship of Aphrodite and Hercules came to Greece from the Phœnician cult of Astarte and Melkarth. The revels connected with the worship of Dionysus were due to Egypt.

Over and above the systems of the greater divinities which were elaborated by the Greeks and Romans, they were exceedingly hospitable to the gods of conquered lands. These were introduced with much of the strange ritual connected with them, and large numbers of the vulgar were carried away with their worship. Many strange and grotesque conceptions of what may be termed popular mythology also succeeded in entering the classical lands—some from one cause, some from

another. Thus Herodotus appears to have taken, so Heeren supposes, a caravan journey through North Africa, as described by him in iv. 181-185; and we can trace the marvels which were told him in his journey becoming, on his return, part and parcel of Greek thought. To this were due the marvellous animals which his description of a large strip of territory, being *θηριώδης*, westward of the river Triton, allowed the play of fancy at once to create: oxen which fed backwards, owing to the projection of their horns in front; snakes, lions, elephants, bears, asps, horned wild asses, dog-headed apes, monsters with no heads and eyes in their chests, "as the Libyans tell, and wild men and wild women, and multitudes of other creatures in nowise fabulous," as the historian feelingly says.¹ It is curious that the monstrous creatures which Robinson Crusoe met are placed by Defoe in this region. Most probably many of these reports were industriously spread abroad by the Carthaginians to prevent troublesome neighbours from interfering with their commerce; but much must be assigned to the tendency of all ignorance to exaggerate. Here, too, was the country of the Garamantes, Lotophagi, and others, where Greek fancy could plant marvels of any kind; much as our popular writers take New Guinea and the Cannibal Islands for the home of their ideal monsters.

Modern philology has done much to winnow the corn from the chaff in these mythological

¹ Herod., iv. 191.

speculations. It is now generally recognised that astronomical phenomena, the succession of day and night, the procession of the sun through the signs of the zodiac, and the like, underlie many of the most grotesque of these classical beliefs. "By a succession of the most fortunate circumstances, the astronomical books of three of the principal religions of the ancient world have lately been recovered—the Veda, the Zend-Avesta, and the Tripitaka. But not only have we thus gained access to the most authentic documents from which to study the ancient religion of the Brahmans, the Zoroastrians, and the Buddhists, but by discovering the real origin of Greek, Roman, and likewise of Teutonic, Celtic, and Slavonic mythology, it has become possible to separate the truly religious elements in the sacred traditions of these nations from the mythological crust by which they are surrounded, and thus to gain a clearer insight into the real faith of the ancient Aryan world."¹ It may, however, be reasonably doubted whether the universal solvent of a solar myth has not been too frequently applied. Many of the mythological animals of the ancients appear to have been created for a moral purpose; therefore it is out of place to regard them as emblems of astronomical phenomena. "Upon deliberate consideration," says Lord Bacon, "my judgment is that a concealed instruction and allegory was originally intended in many of the ancient fables." And the least

¹ Max Müller, "Selected Essays" (Longmans, 1881), vol. i., p. 5.

reflection will shew to a believer in revelation that the Greeks often spake of things higher than they knew when they discoursed of mythical animals and events. These stories are many of them waifs and strays which have floated down the stream of time from the original home of the human race. They are part of the fairy-tales told in the nursery of man during the infancy of the world, drawn by the Greeks and Romans from "the common stock of ancient tradition, and varied but in point of embellishment, which is their own. And this principally raises my esteem of these fables; which I receive, not as the product of the age or invention of the poets, but as sacred relics, gentle whispers, and the breath of better times, that from the traditions of more ancient nations came at length into the flutes and trumpets of the Greeks."¹ In pursuance of this view, Lord Bacon explains Typhon to mean a rebel; Proteus, matter; the Sphinx, science; the Sirens, pleasures; and Scylla and Charybdis, the middle way; and so forth. The Cyclopes again, so poetically described by Virgil:

"Centum alii curva hæc habitant at littora vulgo
Infandi Cyclopes, et altis montibus errant ;"

and again :

"Cernimus adstantes necquidquam lumine torvo
Ætnæos fratres, concilium horrendum,"

become, in his view, ministers of terror assisting a despotism. The poets, however, do not seem to

¹ Bacon's "Wisdom of the Ancients," Preface.

bear him out in this interpretation; with them the Cyclopes rather represent the excessive toil required in forging iron, and shew that the blessings of civilization are only attained by constant and unenviable labours—"as when the Cyclopes hastily forge thunderbolts out of tough masses of metal; some take in and blow out the gales of heaven from their bellows of bullhide, others dip the hissing bronze into the lake. Ætna groans at the weight of the anvils placed upon her. They, vying with one another with mighty force, raise their arms together, and turn with stout-holding forceps the weighty iron."¹

Kingsley opined that our own Teutonic forefathers imported their elves, trolls, pixies, and the like, from the heart of Asia. They seem to us rather a spontaneous growth of the northern mind, suited to the attributes of the "blameless Hyperboreans," who gave them birth. No monstrous brood are they, swelling with envy and rage against heaven and earth, like Hylæus, Typhoeus, and the remnants of the giants of Grecian fancy, but kindly household sprites, willing to be friendly with man; and, if a little tricky at times, easily appeased by a bowl of milk, a freshly-baked cake, or the like. Even Thor and Odin (Thunder and Wind) were magnanimous and placable, if huge and all-powerful. Images of terror and superhuman force and cruelty naturally affected the Greeks in their beautiful land and mild, soporific climate. The Scandinavians, on

¹ Virgil, "*Æn.*," iii. 634, 677; "*Georg.*," iv. 170-175.

the other hand, with their barren cliffs, vast precipices, and stern lengthy winters, were more accessible in the way of contrast to gentler and softer beings who would refine the ruggedness of their national character. Yet early northern art, like Greek poetry, played with and expanded its types of the supernatural into a thousand quaint interlaced devices. That Christianity underlaid most of these curious carvings, so familiar to admirers of Pictish or Scandinavian stone-sculpture, is manifest from the circumstance of the crosses in some floriated and interwoven pattern frequently forming the foundation of a wealth of ornamentation and imagery. In these crosses are often found fine bosses or holes (for the five wounds of our Lord), just as is so frequently observed in the fine crosses of Cornwall. The imagination of the carvers was allowed to run riot round this symbol of salvation. Among the most lovely twisted cable-patterns are seen on the old Scotch stones birds, fish kissing each other (as at Mortlach), deer pursuing each other (Elgin), horse-headed fish (Upper Manbean), serpents, bulls, horses, bears, fish with the adipose fin represented—proving how carefully the artist had copied nature—galleys, reindeer (near Grantown), wild boars with very conspicuous tusks, ospreys eating fish, and the like. “The eye,” says Burton, “becomes almost tired with the endless succession of grim and ghastly human figures, of distorted limbs, of preternatural beasts, birds, and fishes, of dragons, centaurs, and entwined snakes.” The germs of

this characteristically circular ornamentation may be seen in the singular curves and circles of early Celtic and prehistoric times, many of which are still preserved in stone. And yet there are points to connect Scandinavian with Oriental stone-sculpture. Even in Ceylon stones may be seen with elephants, crescents, serpents, and geese carved on them. At Canna, in the Hebrides, in a little churchyard, a broken cross of yellow sandstone exists bearing curious carvings, and, among other things, exhibiting a camel,¹ "the only instance of it known in Scotland." Lions are also, at least twice, found among the creatures carved on the sculptured stones of Scotland. Such marvellous kinship is there between the different families of the human race; so curiously have early beliefs expanded, shrunk, disappeared, and again emerged in the most unexpected localities.

Another fertile source of zoological myths among the ancients was their total ignorance in many cases, in others what is equally dangerous, their little knowledge of natural history. Pliny knew a little about the cuckoo, for instance; but, trading on this, he simply invented the fable that it is eaten by its own kind. This tendency may often be seen in his recitals. The sea-monster, *κῆτος*, was idealized from the large sharks of the Mediterranean by the help, in all probability, of

¹ "The Hebrides," by Miss Gordon Cumming, 1883, p. 112. See also "Rude Stone Monuments," by Fergusson, *passim*; "The Sculptured Stones of Scotland" (Spalding Club), 2 vols. fol., by John Stuart, 1856-67; "The Bookhunter," J. H. Burton, p. 396 (Edinburgh, 1863).

Phœnician traditions of whales; and then the next step was easy, the stories of Andromeda and Hesione, and their release by heroes. Similarly the hydra¹ was magnified from the snake. The Harpies, too, which inhabited the Strophades, were faint shadows of travellers' tales from the East. Large bats were speedily transformed by credulous wonder into

“Virginei volucrûm vultus, fœdissima ventris
Proluvies, uncæque manus, et pallida semper
Ora fame;”

and then the poet may well add, “Tristius haud illis monstrum.”²

The process of mythological creation can be seen in the “Odyssey,” where the word Harpy first occurs. In it Harpies are simply storm-winds which sweep off their victims; the fouler features were afterwards added.³ Once more, the griffin was fabled to possess a lion's body, with an eagle's face and wings. When we are told that it was said to guard the gold-mines in the country of the Arimaspi, we are at no loss to discover the reason which prompted its creation.⁴ It is not so easy to trace the genesis of the Chimæra, “the invincible Chimæra,” as Homer terms it, “which was of divine, and not of mortal lineage, a lion in front, a dragon behind, and a she-goat in the midst, breathing forth the dreadful might of blazing

¹ “Quinquaginta atris immanis hiatibus Hydra
Sævior intus habet sedem.”—Virgil, “Æn.,” vi. 576.

² Virgil, “Æn.,” iii. 214, and 223 *seq.*

³ “Odyssey,” xx. 77.

⁴ See Virgil, “Ecl.,” viii. 27, and the note of Forbiger.

fire.”¹ At all events, it served Virgil for an object on which to expend his imagination when it figured on the helmet of Turnus:

“Cui triplici crinita juba galea alta Chimæram
Sustinet, Ætnæos efflantem faucibus ignes ;
Tam magis illa fremens, et tristibus effera flammis,
Quam magis effuso crudeſcunt ſanguine pugnæ.”

And the Laureate was probably indebted to it for the fine imagery of his hero Arthur’s helmet which Guinevere ſaw,

“Wet with the miſts and ſmitten by the lights,
The Dragon of the great Pendragonſhip
Blaze, making all the night a ſtream of fire.”

Occaſionally the poets, and eſpecially the ſyſtematizers of the national theology, from one monſter fabled the birth of others. Thus from Typhoeus and Echidna, Geryon, Orthos, Cerberus and the Hydra were ſaid to have ſprung. Naturally, this principle was capable of indefinite expanſion in the hands of imaginative writers. Natural but unfamiliar objects ſupplied the nucleus round which other myths might centre. Thus the aſtoniſhment of their neighbours when they firſt beheld the Theſſalians mounted on horſeback led to the formation of thoſe fabulous creatures, the Centaurs. The Greeks, it is well known, at the ſiege of Troy were unacquainted with the art of riding. Again, the ſight and ſound of a roaring whirlpool, with much broken water and ſurf, furniſhed the hint for ſome ſea-ſong, which told of Scylla and her ſix heads, each

¹ “Il.,” vi. 179 ; and “Æn.,” vii. 785.

possessed of three rows of teeth, while below the waist she developed into frightful dogs, which never ceased barking. Then the poets amplified to their own liking. Thus Homer, "the great father of them all:"

"Now, in the middle of the cliff is a darkling cavern, looking westward, turned towards Erebus, nor in sooth could a vigorous man from a hollow ship having shot an arrow penetrate with it the depths of that hollow cave. Therein dwells Scylla, barking terribly. Her voice is like that of a young whelp, and herself is, in truth, a monstrous woe; nor would anyone rejoice when he beheld her, nor even a god, if he approached her. All her twelve feet are mis-shapen, and her six necks are very long, and set on each is a terrible head, with three ranks of teeth in it, many and crowded together, full of black death. Up to the midst of her she is sunk in the hollow cavern, but thrusts out her heads from its dreadful gulf. And there she fishes, gazing round the cliff for dolphins, and sea-dogs, and any greater monster which she can seize, whereof deep-voiced Amphitrite tends many thousands."¹ The undefined horror of much of this description largely enhances its terror. What, for instance, is more striking than the expression, "teeth full of black death"? Had Virgil been contented with his Scylla, and the cliffs resounding with blue sea-dogs, his monster would have gained in vastness and awe; but he must needs particularize, and at once the charm of the "monstrum,

¹ Hom., "Od.," xii. 89.

horrendum, informe, ingens," disappears. "A cave restrains Scylla with its dark recesses as she thrusts forth her mouths and drags ships on to the rocks. Above, she bears the countenance of a man, and as far as her loins is a virgin, with beautiful breasts; her extremities form a sea-monster" (*pistrix*), "with huge body and the womb of wolves attached to the tails of dolphins."¹ A pretty account of the transformation of Scylla into this sea-monster may be found in Ovid ("Met.," xiv. 60-67). The poetic instinct, however, is strong with Virgil; when describing the descent of two Centaurs from snowy mountains he refrains from particulars, and merely calls them "nubigenæ"²—cloud-sprung. Though primarily denoting their parentage, the epithet is in other ways a happy one from its indefiniteness.

Even fifty years before the Christian era, not only the monstrous creatures above spoken of, but also the ordinary deities, were only believed in by the vulgar. Philosophers, however, either tacitly endured or treated them with open contempt. "The very children and old women ridiculed Cerberus and the Furies, or treated them as mere metaphors of conscience. In the deism of Cicero, the popular divinities were discarded, the oracles refuted and ridiculed, the whole system of divination pronounced a political imposture, and the genesis of the miraculous traced to the exuberance of the imagination, and to certain diseases of the judgment."³ Comedy at Athens early learnt to

¹ Virgil, "Æn.," iii. 426.

² Virgil, "Æn.," vii. 674.

³ Lecky's "History of European Morals," vol. i., p. 165.

mock at the popular gods, and naturally at such mythological monsters and heroes as Homer had reverently recounted as seen by his hero in Hades, Tityos lying on nine roods of ground, and ever devoured by two vultures; Tantalus up to his chin in water, with the finest fruit hanging before him from branches which he could never grasp, and the like.¹ The forms of these favourites of the poets lingered, however, in art; sculptors, painters, potters, glyptic artists, gladly availed themselves of their fantastic shapes, as had the old poets before them. Cyclops and the Harpies, Medusa's head and the hundred-eyed Argus are examples in point. Thus Pegasus becomes the type of Corinth on the coins of Augustus, and the Sphinx of Egypt. The Siren, half-bird, half-virgin, represents Cumæ. The Chimæra is another emblem of Corinth. The Centaur Chiron and the Griffin are found on late coins dedicated to Apollo. Others are to be seen on bas-reliefs and vases. If they ever possessed any constraining moral or religious force, it has long evaporated; but the poet and the artist are still thankful for these old mythological forms. For them,

“Vinctus sedet immanis serpentibus Otos,
Devinctum mæstus procul aspiciens Ephialten;”

and

“Cerberus et diris flagrat latratibus ora,
Anguibus hinc atque hinc horrent cui colla reflexis,
Sanguineique micant ardorem luminis orbes.”²

¹ “Od.,” xi. 577 *seq.*

² Virgil, “Culex,” 219, 233.

In the same manner Spenser depicts in a famous stanza the singular group of objects drawn from ancient monstrosities and romantic conceptions with which were decorated the walls of the house of Imagination :

“ His chamber was dispaigned all within
 With fondry colours, in the which were writ
 Infinite shapcs of thinges dispersed thin ;
 Some such as in the world were never yit,
 Ne can devized be of mortall wit ;
 Some daily scene and knowen by their names
 Such as in idle fantasies do flit ;
 Infernall hags, centaurs, feedes, hippodames,
 Apes, lyons, ægles, owles, fooles, lovers, children, dames.”¹

It can hardly be said, therefore, as Aulus Gellius too confidently affirms, that marvels and prodigies such as we have named are of no importance, “*ad ornandum juvandumque usum vitæ.*”² He himself, on landing from Greece at Brundisium, tells us how eagerly he rushed to a bookseller’s shop, bought up a quantity of books containing such recitals at a cheap rate, and then devoured them in two consecutive nights. In short, the imagination must be fed, like the bodily appetite ; and stories of marvels must at times be served up to it, when they are as grateful after a period of abstinence as highly-seasoned viands are at certain times to the bodily taste. They served for ruder ages the same end which our own novels of character and slight incident perform for more critical readers. They amuse and insensibly instruct. It was impossible for an ancient Greek to listen to

¹ “*Faerie Queene*,” ii. 9, 50.

² Aulus Gellius, ix. 4.

the hunting of the mighty Calydonian boar without his own pulses beating the quicker the next time he found himself chasing a dangerous quarry in the Thessalian mountains; nor could he ever hear the recital of Cyclops's cannibal feast and portentous gluttony, as told in the "Odyssey," without having his own character directed to that moderation and chastened spirit which are among the special attributes of his nation. Though discredited, they still hold their own in the national Olympus, mutely inculcating a horror of the monstrous appetites of savagery.

He who would gauge the credulity of our forefathers in the matter of monsters should consult Topfel's "History of Four-footed Beasts," 1658. There he will find marvellous accounts and illustrations of the sea-horse, the su, the water-sheep, the tartarine, and the mantichora. Topfel obtained his notion of this horrific creature from Ctesias, but his print of it is so amazing, that it was certainly evolved from imagination.

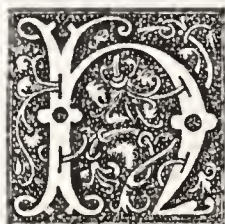




CHAPTER XVII.

OYSTERS AND PEARLS.

“Parum scilicet fuerat in gulas condi maria, nisi manibus, auribus, capite, totoque corpore a fœminis juxta virisque gestarentur.”—(PLINY, *Nat. Hist.*, ix. 35.)



HIGHLY prized as pearls have been whenever they could be procured, the Greeks seem to have known little or nothing of them; and yet the Phœnicians, those master-mariners of antiquity, might well be supposed to have trafficked in them, when they

“Saw the merry Grecian coaster come,
Freighted with amber grapes, and Chian wine,
Green bursting figs, and tunnies steeped in brine,
And knew the intruders on their ancient home.”

It might have been thought, too, that Homer would have hung a carcanet of pearls round Helen's neck, or powdered the braided tresses of Circe and Calypso with them, when he wished to enhance their beauty. Until the first century before Christ they were not abundant, or objects

of ordinary luxury at Rome. During the reigns of the Cæsars, in the first century after Christ, pearls were highly valued, and were prominently displayed by the Romans at

“ Their sumptuous gluttonies and gorgeous feasts
On citron tables or Atlantic stone,
Their wines of Setia, Cales and Falerne,
Chios, and Crete,”

when they would

“ Quaff in gold,
Crystal, and myrrhine cups, embossed with gems
And studs of pearl.”¹

The oyster, however, was well known to the Greeks. In early times, indeed, it seems to have been curiously despised as an article of food. The only time that it is mentioned in Homer is when Patroclus, in the “*Iliad*,” hurls Cebriones, the charioteer of Hector, from his place in the chariot, and, after the fashion of the time, mocks him: “Ye gods! truly he is an active man! How cleverly he dives! If, indeed, he were on the fishy sea, this fellow would satisfy many men by groping on the bottom for oysters, leaping off his ship even if it were very stormy weather, so cleverly does he now dive head-foremost from his chariot to the plain!”² This passage is curious both in itself, and also because it was much used in controversy by the Chorizontes (those who would assign the “*Iliad*” and “*Odysssey*” to different authors), inasmuch as the Homer of the “*Iliad*,” it was said, does not introduce his heroes as eaters

¹ “*Par. Regained*,” iv. 114.

² “*Il.*,” xvi. 145.

of fish, but the author of the "Odyſſey" does ("Odyſſey," xii. 330-332). On the other hand, it was replied by the Scholiaſt with a delightfully unſcientific, if concluſive, argument, that they who are accuſtomed to eat oyſters may be conſidered to know the uſe of fiſh in diet. A Homeric hero, however, would as ſoon have thought of eating fiſh as a hero of Dr. Johnſon's time would have drunk claret.¹ Ariſtotle gives an elaborate account of the oyſter's habits and anatomy: "It has the ſtrangeſt nature of all creatures, its body being altogether concealed in ſhell. It poſſeſſes two openings, ſome little diſtance from each other, very ſmall, and not eaſy to be diſcerned, by means of which it takes in and ſends out water;" and more of ſimilar import. He treats its ſenſes with ſcant reverence; but we know that an oyſter poſſeſſes heart, liver, mouth, gills, and other organs, to ſay nothing of a capacious ſtomach and ciliary appendages, which bring a conſtant ſtream of water and food to its mouth. What chiefly ſtruck the ancient Greeks with regard to its economy is what firſt impreſſes a child at preſent, the cloſe manner in which it clings to the rock. Plato employs this habit of the oyſter in a beautiful paſſage: "We have given a true account of the ſoul," he ſays, "in its preſent appearance; but we have looked at it in a ſtate like that of the ſea-god Glaucus, whoſe original nature can no longer be

¹ "Sir, claret is the liquor for boys; port for men: but he who aſpires to be a hero" (ſmiling) "muſt drink brandy." (Boſwell, vol. iii., p. 411, ed. 1816.)

readily discerned by the eye, because the old members of his body have been either broken off or crushed, and in every way marred by the action of the waves; and because extraneous substances—like oysters, and sea-weeds, and stones—have attached themselves to him, so that he resembles any other monster than his natural shape: so with respect to the soul, we behold it affected by ten thousand evils.” And he continues: “We must look at its philosophical nature, and must consider to what it clings and what company it longs for, inasmuch as it is kindred with the Divine, and the Immortal, and the Ever-existing; and what it would become were it wholly to follow these attributes, and by this impulse be borne upwards out of the sea in which it now lies, and disencumbered of the stones and oysters, and the many earthy, stony, and harsh substances, which have clung to it in consequence of its feasting upon earth, at those banquetings which are deemed so happy.”¹

Pliny disregards the oyster in comparison with its parasite, the pearl. It furnishes him with sorrowful reflections upon the luxury of his age, the costliness and hazard with which it is sought for: “*Principium culmenque omnium rerum pretii margaritæ tenent.*” Fine pearls are supplied by the Indian Ocean; “and yet, to come by them, we must go and search among those huge and terrible monsters of the sea which we have spoken of before. We must pass over so many

¹ Plato, “*Repub.*,” 611 D.

feas, and faile into far countries so remote, and come into those parts where the heate of the sun is so excessive and extreme, and, when all is done, we may perhaps misse of them." But the best are found in the Persian Gulf. Professor Skeat considers the word "pearl" derived from the Low Latin "perula" or "pirula," a little pear, the diminutive of "pirum." Whether from design or misprint, his view is curiously borne out by Holland in the following words: "This shell-fish, which is the mother of Pearle, differs not much in the maner of breeding and generation from the Oysters; for when the season of the yeare requireth that they should engender, they seeme to yawne and gape, and so do open wide; and then (by report) they conceive a certaine moist dewe as feed, wherewith they swell and grow big, and when time commeth labor to be delivered thereof; and the fruit of these shell-fishes are the Peares [*sic*], better or worse, great or small, according to the qualitie and quantitie of the dew which they received. For if the dew were pure and cleare which went into them, then are the Pearles white, faire, and Orient; but if grosse and troubled, the Pearles likewise are dimme, foul, and duskish." This conceit of pearls being sprung from dew runs through much mediæval poetry, and is a favourite fancy with theologians. What was regarded as playful imagination in Lord Beaconsfield's story of the jeweller coming down once a year to wipe the duchess's pearls and lay them gently in the sun with a south wind, has its prototype in Pliny.

He says the colour of pearls becomes yellow or remains white, like the complexion, according as they are exposed to much or little sunshine. And yet, "as orient as they be, they waxe yellow with age, become riveled, and looke dead, without any lively vigor; so as that commendable orient lustre (so much sought for of our great lords and costly dames) continueth but in their youth and decaieth with yeares."

Some shells were kept at Rome for perfume-cases, and in them the pearls were left adhering to the halves. The pearl itself was supposed by Pliny to be soft and tender in the water, but to grow hard when once removed. If he exaggerates the danger of the shell closing upon the hand, he does not sufficiently dwell upon the perils which the shell-divers run from the attacks of sharks. These are their most dreaded foes. It is worth while transcribing some more of his quaint fancies in Holland's words: "Let the fisher looke well to his fingers, for if she catch his hand between, off it goeth; so trenchant and sharp an edge she carrieth, that is able to cut it quite a-two. And verily this is a just punishment for the [theefe, and none more: albeit she be furnished and armed with other means of revenge. For they keep for the most part about craggie rocks, and are there found; and if they lie in the deepe, accompanied lightly they are with curst sea-dogs. And yet all this will not serve to skar men away from fishing after them; for why? our dames and gentlewomen must have their eares behanged

with them, there is no remedie. Some say that these mother-pearles have their kings and captaines, as Bees have; that as they have their swarmes led by a master-Bee, so every troupe and companie of these have one speciall great and old one to conduct it, and such commonly have a singular dexteritie, and wonderfull gift to prevent and avoid all daungers. These they be that the dyvers after pearles are most carefull to come by, for if they be once caught, the rest scatter asunder and be soone taken up within the nets." He knew of their being laid in heaps, as at present, until, on the creature dying, the pearls are found in the shells. A good pearl ought to possess five qualities: it should be orient (glittering), white, great, round, smooth, and weighty. The best pearls, when these qualities meet in them, were known at Rome as "Unions," "as a man would say Singular, and by themselves alone. The Greeks have no such tearmes for them, neither know they how to call them; nor yet the Barbarians, who found them first out, otherwise than *Margaritæ*."¹ Their highest praise, he adds, is to be called *exaluminati*, i.e. orient, and clear as alum. Pear-shaped pearls, (or *elenchi*) were greatly valued; "our dames take a great pride in a brauerie, to haue these not only hang dangling at their fingers, but also two or three of them together pendant at their eares." They took pleasure in hearing them when thus hung knock

¹ This word "margarita," so well-known in modern languages, is said to be derived from a Sanscrit word *manâarîtâ*, "the pure." (See Trench, "Parables," 6th ed., p. 130.)

together like cymbals; hence such pearls were called *crotalia*. All this luxury once more tempts him to moralize. "Now adayes also it is growne to this passe, that meane women and poore mens wives affect to weare them, because they would be thought rich, and a by-word it is amongst them, That a faire pearle at a woman's eare is as good in the street where she goeth as an huisher to make way, for that every one will give such the place.¹ Nay, our gentlewomen are come now to weare them upon their feet, and not at their shoo-latchets only, but also vpon their startups and fine buskins, which they garnish all ouer with pearle. For it will not suffice nor serue their turne to carie pearles about them, but they must tread upon pearles, goe among pearles, and walke, as it were, on a pauement of pearle."

Some pearles, but few and small ones, were found in the Bosphorus, and off the coasts of Acarnania and Mauretania. From these Pliny passes to a notorious example of wasteful excess and intolerable pride. "I myselfe have seen Lollia Paulina (late wife and after widdow to Caius Caligula the emperor), when she was dressed and set out, not in stately wise nor of purpose for some great solemnity, but only when she was to go to a wedding supper, or rather unto a feast

¹ To show how diffuse is Dr. Philemon Holland, it is worth while contrasting this sentence with the terse beauty of the original: "Affectantque jam et pauperes, lictorem fœminæ in publico unionem esse dictitantes." Yet is Holland's quaintness not displeasing. "Huisher" is our modern "usher," and "start-ups" are high shoes.

when the assurance was made, and great persons they were not that made the said feast," (*mediocrium etiam sponfalium cœna*),—"I have seen her, I say, so beset and bedeckt all over with hemeraulds and pearles, disposed in rewes, ranks, and courses, one by another, round about the attire of her head, her cawle, her borders, her peruk of hair, her bondgrace" (high hood over the forehead), "and chaplet; at her ears pendant, about her neck in a carcanet, upon her wrest in bracelets, and on her fingers in rings, that she glittered and shon again like the sun as she went. The value of these ornaments she esteemed and rated at 400 hundred thousand Sestertii." When Pliny mentally compares this luxury with the simple array of such old Romans as Curius or Fabricius even while triumphing, he cannot forbear bitter reflections. Who would not have wished that they had been pulled out of their chariots and never triumphed, than that their victories should have let into Rome such a flood of costly ornaments! As for Lollia herself, she may fitly point a moral. All these jewels came to her from her uncle, M. Lollius, and were the fruit of his extortions and outrageous exactions from different provinces. Yet the end was that, losing the friendship of Caligula, and being accused of bribery and corruption, he "dranke a cup of poison, and preuented his judicial trial; that forsooth his neece Lollia, all to be hanged with jewels of 400 hundred thousand Sestertii, should be seene glittering and looked at of euery man by candle-light all a supper time."

Pliny also tells the story of Cleopatra and the precious pearl, which she dissolved in vinegar and then swallowed, in order to carry out her vain-glorious boast that her supper should cost her sixty millions of sesterces. Clodius, however, the son of a tragic poet, had long before her time performed the same senseless feat. After the taking of Alexandria, pearls were common at Rome. Arabia, Pliny notes, is blessed in its perfumes, is still more enriched by its seas and the abundance of pearls which they produce.¹

In the Old Testament, the word "pearl" is supposed to mean "mother-of-pearl," or "crystal," or "rubies." The pearl proper was not known to the Jews until later times; it often appears in the imagery of the New Testament.

The true pearl-oyster is the *avicula margaritifera* of the Persian Gulf, Cape Comorin, and Ceylon; but in Britain pearls are found in the *unio margaritiferus*, in the *ostrea edulis* (oyster), and even in the *mytilus communis* (common mussel), though these are not so valuable. The white iridescent mother-of-pearl substance in these shells is known as "nacre." It is composed of layers of membranous shell-substance. The pearl itself is merely an accretion of nacre, generally round some substance of foreign origin which has found its way into the shell. Hence artificial pearls have been procured by wounding the creature with a sharp-pointed implement or introducing foreign bodies.

¹ See Pliny (Holland's Translation), ix. 35; xii. 18; and Hor., ii. 4, 239.

The *ostrea edulis*, although pearls are found in it, was in Roman times, as in ours, far more celebrated at feasts. It may be said to have its capital in Britain (says Professor E. Forbes), although it is found elsewhere on the coasts of Europe. It has always been esteemed best from the beds off Kent. In Roman times, an epicure could distinguish the British oysters at once :

“ Circeis nata forent an
Lucrinum ad faxum, Rutupinove edita fundo
Ostrea, callebat primo deprendere morfu ;”¹

just as anyone can at present tell a native from the huge coarse oyster of Cleethorpes.

The Romans knew of, and prized our British pearls. Indeed, Suetonius intimates that they formed the chief inducement to Cæsar to invade Britain. Pliny characterizes them fairly, as being small and poorly coloured; and he knew them well, as the breastplate which Julius Cæsar dedicated to Venus Genetrix at Rome was composed of them. Those rivers, with us, which flow from mountains generally contain the pearl-shells. The Esk and Conway are famous for them. A Conway pearl is said to be inserted in the royal crown of England. The Irt, in Cumberland, also produces pearls; but the most famous of our pearl-bearing rivers, in ancient as in modern times, was undoubtedly the Tay. We have examined many which were found in this river in recent years. They are all wanting in brilliancy—are not orient, in short. The best have a slightly pink tinge.

¹ Juv., iv. 140.

Tacitus, like Pliny, moralizes over pearls. To both writers they were the symbol of unbounded luxury. "The ocean round Britain produces pearls, but they are dusky and of a livid hue. Some think that those who collect them are wanting in art, for, in the Red Sea, pearls are taken out from their shells while living and yet breathing; in Britain they are collected just as they have been expelled by the pearl-oyster. I would sooner believe that fine properties were wanting to the pearls than avarice in us."¹

Among the gifts which Ovid feigns Pygmalion to have heaped on the statue of the nymph whom he loved, are gems for the fingers and necklaces for her slender neck:

"Aure leves baccæ, redimicula pectore pendent,
Cuncta decent."

Virgil, too, when speaking of the blissful life of the shepherd, says,—what if he has none of the refinements of luxury:—

"Nec Indi
Conchea bacca maris pretio est; at pectore puro
Sæpe super tenero prosternit gramine corpus."

Indeed, "bacca" or "berry," with some poetic addition, was a usual designation for a pearl. "Variis spirat Nereia bacca figuris," says Claudian; sometimes by itself:

"Quin et Sidonias chlamydes, et cingula baccis
Aspera, gemmataque togas
Dividis ex æquo."

¹ Tac. "Ag.," 12. British pearls with Pliny are "parvos atque decolores;" with Tacitus, "subfusca ac liventia."

And still more clearly, with some epithet :

“Nec fit marita quæ rotundioribus
Onusta baccis ambulet.”¹

Shakespeare does not seem to have been fond of pearls ; he loves, indeed, the “liquid pearl” on the “bladed grafs,” but does not go out of his way to dwell upon the beauty or rarity of the ornament. He had read Pliny, however, as appears from what Troilus says of Cressida :

“Her bed is India ; there she lies, a pearl.”

With Milton, the pearl forms part, not only of his classical imagery, but also of his deep sense of the beauty that dwells in all harmonious and regular sights and sounds. He knew the mediæval conceit of tears changing into pearls :

“The fair blossom hangs the head
Sideways, as on a dying bed,
And those pearls of dew she wears,
Prove to be presaging tears.”²

With him, too,

“Morn, her rosy steps in the eastern clime
Advancing, sowed the earth with orient pearl.”³

And in Paradise,

“From that sapphire fount the crisped brooks,
Rolling on orient pearl and sands of gold,
With mazy error, under pendent shades
Ran nectar.”

In heaven, too, there is a bright sea “of jasper, or

¹ Ovid, “Met.,” x. 265 ; Virgil, “Cul.,” 67 ; Claud., “Cons. Honor,” 592 ; and “Laud. Stil.,” ii. 88 ; Hor., “Ep.,” viii. 13.

² “Epitaph on the Marchioness of Winchester.”

³ “Par. Lost,” v. i.

of liquid pearl;" while as for the pearls of actual daily life,

"The gorgeous East, with richest hand,
Show'rs on her kings barbaric pearl and gold."

And, fairest scene of all, when Sabrina "commended her innocence" to the Severn's flood:

"The water nymphs that in the bottom played,
Held up their pearled wrists and took her in."¹

Who that has not seen them for himself, if he loves to muse near running water, hold up their pearled wrists as the long-swaying tresses of the water ranunculus, with their white blossoms, rise to the surface and again gracefully sink?

Pearls are only one item in the long list of woman's adornments which so characteristically call forth the anger of Burton: "Why do they adorn themselves with so many colours of pearls, fictitious flowers, curious needle-works, quaint devices, sweet-smelling odours, with those inestimable riches of precious stones, pearls, rubies, diamonds, emeralds? etc. Why do they crown themselves with gold and silver, use coronets and tires of several fashions, deck themselves with pendants, bracelets, ear-rings, chains, girdles, rings, furs, spangles, embroyderies, shadows rebatoes, versicolor ribbands? Why do they make such glorious shows with their scarfs, feathers, fans, masks, furs, laces, tiffanies, ruffs, falls, calls, cuffs, damasks, velvets, tinsels, cloth of gold, silver tissue?" etc. And then the old misogynist concludes:

¹ See "Par. Loft," iv. 238; ii. 4; "Comus," 834.

“They had more need, some of them, be tied in bedlam with iron chains; have a whip for a fan, and hair-cloths next to their skins, instead of wrought smocks; and have their cheeks stigmatized with a hot iron, I say, some of our Jezebels, instead of painting, if they were well served.”

“Pars minima est ipsa puella fui.”¹

¹ “Anatomy of Melancholy,” Part iii. 2, 3.



